



June 2013

# Evaluation of the California Community Foundation's Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men (BLOOM) Initiative

## One-Year Evaluation Report

### 2012-2013

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## I. Executive Summary

In May 2012, the California Community Foundation (CCF), a public, charitable organization serving Los Angeles County, launched a five-year initiative focused on serving Black male youth involved in the juvenile delinquency system. The *Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men* (BLOOM) Initiative was designed with the goal of redirecting Black male youth, ages 14-18 years old involved with the Los Angeles County probation system, toward improved educational and employment opportunities and outcomes<sup>1</sup>. The disproportionate representation of Black male youth on probation and in prison is staggering. In Los Angeles County for example, Black youth represent 10% of the youth population, yet they comprise approximately 30% of all youth under probation supervision. The overrepresentation of Black males in the probation system reveals an urgent need and a destructive cycle, which the BLOOM Initiative seeks to disrupt.

To address the overrepresentation of Black male youth involved with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, the BLOOM Initiative funded five direct-service, community-based organizations (CBO's) to provide programs in a key strategy area identified by CCF/BLOOM as critical toward improving pathways for probation-involved Black male youth. The goal of the Initiative is to redirect these young men toward improved educational and employment opportunities and outcomes. In particular, the criteria youth must meet to be eligible for BLOOM includes (1) Black male; (2) between the ages of 14 and 18; (3) South Los Angeles resident; and (4) currently or has previously been on probation. Additionally, two companies were funded to provide auxiliary services, consisting of support toward two of the BLOOM goals, to re-shape public perception of probation-involved Black males, and to support the capacity building efforts of the five direct-service partners funded as a part of the Initiative.

During the first year of the Initiative (2012 – 2013), the California Community Foundation contracted with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) evaluation team to conduct a process and outcomes-focused evaluation of the BLOOM Initiative. During this year, the evaluation team collected quantitative and qualitative data to establish a baseline for assessing the outcomes of the Initiative and the progress made toward achieving set goals. Based on recommendations from the mid-year evaluation, the California Community Foundation, the BLOOM Advisory Board, and BLOOM Initiative partners, the initial BLOOM strategy areas were revised to better align with Initiative goals – to improve educational and employment opportunities for system-involved Black male youth. Thus this report highlights the progress made toward improved educational and employment opportunities for BLOOM youth.

### **Year One Highlights:**

At the conclusion of year one, a total of 174 young men were enrolled in BLOOM Initiative programs provided by the five community-based organizations serving the South Los Angeles community. Among the 174 enrolled young men, 91.4% were active, in that they were receiving services from one of the five partner organizations, and had not exited the program. While a majority of the BLOOMers were not employed during year one, the data reveals that most were

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<sup>1</sup> Through partnerships with direct-service non-profit organizations, the BLOOM Initiative serves Black males aged 14-18 years, who are or have been under the supervision of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Youth participants of BLOOM partner programming are referred to as BLOOMers.

enrolled full-time in schools, while they remained under the supervision of probation. The first year data also reports that BLOOMers identify mentors and staff at the CBO's, opportunities and exposure, and supportive environments as being most salient to not reoffending.

***First Year Educational Highlights:***

- At the conclusion of the first year, nearly 60% (58.5%) of BLOOM youth were enrolled in, or had completed, the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade.
- During the first year, there was a 45% decrease in the number of BLOOM youth reported as being suspended from school, and a 20.7% decrease in the number of youth reported as being expelled.
- In addition, there was a 3.4% decrease in the percent of BLOOM youth “not enrolled” in school.

***First Year Employment Highlights:***

- More than 92% of BLOOM youth reported “never being employed” prior to their enrollment in BLOOM programs. Whereas at the conclusion of the Initiative’s first year, 90.2% of BLOOMers reporting having never been employed, a decrease of 1.8%.
- An additional 2.31% of BLOOM youth were reported as actively searching for work by regularly attending job interviews.

***BLOOM Youth Participants:***

- During the first year of the Initiative, 93% of BLOOMers have not re-offended.
- In a series of youth focus groups, BLOOM youth identified mentorship, experiential learning opportunities and exposure, and supportive environments as being most salient to not reoffending.

**In year two of the BLOOM Initiative, It is recommended:**

In addition to mid-course recommendations implemented midway through the first year of the Initiative, the evaluation team offers the following recommendations as a way to ensure greater consistency in the services being provided, and the data being collected, by the BLOOM community based partners:

1. Serve high-risk, high-need system involved youth
2. More consistency with data tracking among BLOOM direct-service organizations
3. Greater alignment between the services being provided by the partners and the larger message being disseminated about advocacy for BLOOMers (strategic messaging)
4. More consistent link between probation department and partners

5. Regular monthly meetings by the partners
6. BLOOM partner organizations must have the capacity to adequately service BLOOM youth
7. The current investment focus on Educational and Job opportunities is well underway and should be continued in order for more evidence to be collected over the next year.



## II. Introduction

In May 2012, the California Community Foundation (CCF), a public, charitable organization serving Los Angeles County, launched a five-year initiative focused on serving Black male youth involved in the juvenile delinquency system. The *Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men* (BLOOM) Initiative was designed with the goal of redirecting Black male youth, ages 14-18 years old involved with the Los Angeles County probation system, toward improved educational and employment opportunities and outcomes. The disproportionate representation of Black male youth on probation and in prison is staggering. In Los Angeles County for example, Black youth represent 10% of the youth population, yet they comprise approximately 30% of all youth under probation supervision<sup>2</sup>. The overrepresentation of Black males in the probation system reveals an urgent need and a destructive cycle, which the BLOOM Initiative seeks to disrupt. Through four key strategies identified by the California Community Foundation, the BLOOM Initiative aims to improve the educational, economic, and life chances of probation system-involved Black male youth. Specifically, the goal is to help 1,200 of these youth complete high school and 1,000 youth earn meaningful employment by 2017.

### The BLOOM Initiative

The California Community Foundation identified four key-strategies as necessary to providing a pathway toward improved outcomes of probation-involved, Black male youth. This work is based on the premise that these young men can follow such a pathway with positive outcomes if: (1) policies that lead to chronic system involvement are altered or mitigated; (2) there is more positive messaging about redemption of youth and success stories are highlighted; (3) Black male youth are exposed to new vocational and academic opportunities; and (4) organizations that serve these youth strengthen their overall capacity.<sup>3</sup> However, upon recommendations provided in the mid-year evaluation, discussions with CCF, the BLOOM Advisory Board, and BLOOM Initiative Partners, the four strategy areas were revised to better align with the goals of BLOOM - to improve educational and employment opportunities for system-involved Black male youth. Thus, the BLOOM Initiative selected one core strategy area – ***Educational and Job Opportunity*** – to align with their revised goals. Specifically, the BLOOM Initiative seeks to support: a) the academic advancement of BLOOM youth resulting in high school completion and/or pursuit of post-secondary education, and b) efforts that develop the skills of BLOOM youth that lead to job readiness and/or create a pipeline of employment opportunities for qualified youth. To achieve these goals, the BLOOM Initiative aims to help 1,200 youth complete high school and 1,000 youth earn meaningful employment over the five-year period.

In the first year of the Initiative, five direct-service, community-based organizations were selected to receive funding through BLOOM. These include: 1) Brotherhood Crusade, 2) Community Coalition, 3) Los Angeles Urban League, 4) Youth Justice Coalition, and 5) Youth Mentoring Connection. In addition, Liberty Hill Foundation was chosen to provide capacity building support to the five direct-service partners, and LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS, a for-profit public relations firm was funded to assist with the goal to reshape public perception of system-involved Black male youth. Although the strategies and goals of BLOOM have been

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<sup>2</sup> [www.calfund.org/bloom](http://www.calfund.org/bloom)

<sup>3</sup> California Community Foundation (2012). *Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men: Request for qualifications*.

revised, the list below includes the organization(s)/company funded by the initial BLOOM strategy areas. This includes:

- **Strategy 1: Community Organizing (Policy Advocacy)**  
*Organization(s) Funded: a) Community Coalition, b) Youth Justice Coalition*
- **Strategy 2: Re-shaping Public Perception (Strategic Messaging)**  
*Organization Funded: LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS*
- **Strategy 3: Career-Based Mentoring (Direct Service)**  
*Organization(s) Funded: a) Los Angeles Urban League, b) Youth Mentoring Connection, and c) Brotherhood Crusade*
- **Strategy 4: Strengthening Organizational Capacity (Capacity Building)**  
*Organization Funded: Liberty Hill Foundation*

The BLOOM Initiative represents a strategic approach by CCF to address one of the most pressing issues facing young Black men: disproportionate involvement in the juvenile delinquency system. BLOOM is a landmark effort by CCF comprising the only major philanthropic initiative in the country specifically focused on Black male youth involved in the juvenile justice/delinquency system.<sup>4</sup>

*In this Report:*

In the first year of the BLOOM Initiative, the UCLA evaluation team sought to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Initiative's progress toward their Year One goals and outcomes. Working collaboratively with the California Community Foundation, the BLOOM Initiative director, and the seven organizations funded by BLOOM, the evaluation team used both qualitative and quantitative methods to measure both process and outcomes. This report provides a comprehensive assessment of how well each of the partners was able to effectively carry out the program's goals as outlined by CCF. In this report, we provide an overview of the evaluation process, the BLOOM programs available to the youth participants of the direct-service partners, and an assessment of the gains of the Initiative in the key strategy areas described above. The report concludes with recommendations for Year Two of the Initiative.

### **III. Evaluation of the BLOOM Initiative**

The California Community Foundation contracted with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) evaluation team to conduct a process and outcomes-focused evaluation of the BLOOM Initiative. The UCLA evaluation group consists of a multidisciplinary team from the Department(s) of Public Affairs/Social Welfare and Education. During the first year of the Initiative, the evaluation team collected quantitative and qualitative data to establish a baseline for assessing the outcomes of the Initiative and the progress made toward achieving set goals. Specifically, the evaluation team sought to answer the following questions put forth in the BLOOM Request For Qualifications (RFQ):

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<sup>4</sup> The BLOOM Initiative Case Statement

1. Are there increased supports for Black male youth who are, or have been, involved with the Los Angeles County Probation System?
2. Are BLOOM nonprofit partners able to improve conditions and opportunities for this population relative to the larger target population?
3. How effective is the Initiative strategy in achieving identified short and long-term outcomes? Which strategic components appear to be more successful/challenging? Why or why not?

In addition, over the five-year Initiative, the UCLA team will address questions related to the broader context and landscape related to system-involved Black male youth, as put forth by BLOOM. These questions include:

1. Are there increased philanthropic, government and business investments specifically geared toward this population in this specific issue area? What lessons can be learned and applied for other funders interested in making similar investments?
2. What larger external factors, events or trends have impacted this population in Los Angeles County? What are the implications for the BLOOM initiative and other investors in the field?
3. Has public perception of system-involved Black male youth started to shift? Are there increased educational and employment options available for this population?

Although these questions cannot be addressed in the first year, the UCLA team designed a methodologically rigorous evaluation to establish a baseline that will allow us to monitor and assess progress made toward improved conditions and opportunities for probation-involved Black male youth in Los Angeles. To assess the progress made in the first year of the grant, the evaluation team collaborated with CCF, the BLOOM Initiative Director, and the BLOOM partner organizations to track and monitor BLOOM indicators and outcomes during the 2012-2013 service year (Please refer to Appendix A for a the initial BLOOM Initiative outcomes and indicators, and Appendix I for the revised BLOOM goals and outcomes).

### ***Methodological Approach***

In collaboration with the five direct-service organizations, and the two firms contracted to provide auxiliary service, the evaluation team collected data through interviews, focus groups, and a monthly/quarterly<sup>5</sup> tracking report (see Appendix B for the tracking report variables) in which quantitative data was collected, compiled, and analyzed. The qualitative data (e.g. focus groups and interviews) was collected by members of the UCLA evaluation team working with BLOOM partner organizations between the months of June 2012 and February 2013. Specific to this report, the qualitative data collected allowed the evaluation team to assess: a) how BLOOM youth described their experiences as participants of BLOOM programs, and b) how the five direct-service partners described BLOOM's capacity building efforts. In addition, quantitative data to complete the monthly tracking reports was collected by representatives from each community organization serving BLOOM youth, and subsequently electronically submitted to

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<sup>5</sup> As a part of the data collection process, the five direct-service organizations were required to collect data about the youth enrolled in BLOOM programs. A detailed description of the information collected in these reports is included in the section describing the quantitative data. It is important to note here that initially the reports were submitted monthly, and toward the end of the first year these reports were transitioned to a quarterly submission.

the evaluation team for review and analysis. The tracking reports were collected four times in the first year of the Initiative, during the months of, October and November 2012, and January and May 2013. Table 1 below provides an overview of the five ways in which the evaluation team collected data and the corresponding dates for the data collection process.

**Table 1: Overview of BLOOM Initiative Data Collection (June 1, 2012 – May 30, 2013)**

| Data Points                                | Date of Collection                      |
|--|---|
| <b>Qualitative Data</b>                    |   |
| a) Data Capacity Interviews                | June 2012                               |
| b) Capacity Building Assessment Interviews | October - November 2012                 |
| c) Youth Focus Groups                      | February 2013                           |
| d) Key Informant Interviews                | February 2013                           |
| <b>Quantitative Data</b>                   |   |
| Monthly Tracking Reports                   | August through April, 2013 <sup>6</sup> |

### Description of the Qualitative Data - Interviews & Focus Groups

- a) *Data Capacity Assessment* – During the first phase of the evaluation (April – June 2012), we reviewed each partner’s BLOOM grant proposal and their grant agreement, and conducted in-person “data interviews.” All of the interviews took place during the month of June 2012, and lasted 60 to 90 minutes. The data interviews were devised to gain a better understanding of each organization’s data collection plan. They consisted of a review of the outcomes and measures submitted by each partner in their proposal along with a discussion of their data collection strategy, including what data they planned to collect, from whom, and when. Prior to the in-person interview each partner was asked to provide the UCLA team with a copy of any data collection instruments they used, and to provide hard copies of their instruments at the interview. In addition we requested that the staff member, who served in some capacity on the partner’s BLOOM component, be in attendance. With one exception, the data capacity meetings were attended by two UCLA evaluation team members who took detailed field notes that were reviewed and compared after the meeting.
  
- b) *Capacity Building Assessment with Liberty Hill* – The Liberty Hill Foundation was contracted to serve as the BLOOM capacity building partner. Between May 2012 and March 2013, Liberty Hill provided capacity building support to the five direct-service organizations. As indicated, the BLOOM Initiative identified as a key strategy the need to strengthen the organizational capacity of the partner organizations. A detailed

<sup>6</sup> To streamline the quantitative data received *across* the five direct-service partners, the UCLA evaluation team began collecting monthly tracking reports in October 2012. Between October 2012 and January 2013, the reports were collected on a monthly basis, with the exception of December 2012, when reports were not required. Because of limited change in the information collected, it was advised that the tracking reports be submitted quarterly instead of monthly. The final tracking report for BLOOM year one was collected in May 2013, and is to reflect information about BLOOM youth served between February 1, 2013 and April 30, 2013.

overview of the capacity building program as offered by Liberty Hill can be found in the results and findings section. To assess the Initiative's capacity building efforts, the UCLA evaluation team conducted qualitative interviews with the five direct-service partners and the capacity building partner during the months of October and November 2012. It is critical to note that LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS was *not* interviewed as their role in the project does not require participation in the capacity building training. The partner interview protocol (attached in Appendix C) was designed to interpretively examine and assess the partners' experience of the capacity building support provided by Liberty Hill Foundation. While the interview with Liberty Hill focused on their own assessment of partner's successes and challenges in building capacity (refer to Appendix D for Liberty Hill interview protocol). This facet of the BLOOM project had an abbreviated timeline: Liberty Hill's capacity building sessions began on November 14, 2012 with the qualitative interviews taking place in late October and early November 2012. As a result, there were limitations to the feedback that could be provided by the partners. Despite this, each partner provided important information and valuable insights about each of these foci. The interviews took place at each partner's site, and lasted for time periods ranging from 60 to 120 minutes. With one exception due to scheduling constraints, at least two evaluation team members conducted each interview. All interview sessions were recorded and the files have been saved. In addition, field notes were compiled during the interview, which were reviewed and compared afterwards. (See Appendix E for an overview of the qualitative interview process, including meeting dates for the data interviews as well as the capacity building interviews conducted by the evaluation team).

- c) *Focus Groups with BLOOM Youth* – During the month of February 2013, the UCLA evaluation team conducted five focus groups with BLOOM youth participants. A total of 32 youth, across the five BLOOM direct-service partner sites, offered both their perspectives on and assessment of BLOOM programming and service providers. In addition, the youth shared personal information about their schooling, home, and life experiences prior to enrolling in BLOOM programming, and their experiences from their enrollment in the partner's program onwards. During the focus group with Organization E<sup>7</sup> it became apparent that several of the youth participants were not system-involved as defined by BLOOM. In other words, the youth participants were not and had not been a part of the probation system. Thus, the findings from Organization E were not included in any component of the BLOOM evaluation process. As a result, the findings from the BLOOM youth focus groups were composed from analysis of the responses of 25 youth from four focus groups. The focus groups took place at each partner's site, and were structured as informal conversations to enable the greatest amount of material to emerge. Youth focus groups varied in length, spanning 45 to 90 minutes. All group interviews were attended by at least two evaluation team members, one of whom facilitated the conversation while the other made copious notes. Once the focus groups were completed, the interviewers then completed ethnographic field notes on their impressions. Table 2 below includes an overview of the BLOOM youth focus group participation and the dates in which the sessions took place.

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<sup>7</sup> The name of the organization has been excluded to maintain confidentiality.

**Table 2: BLOOM Youth Focus Group<sup>8</sup> Participation**

| BLOOM Partner Organization                        | Date of Focus Group | Number of Participants |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Organization A                                    | February 13, 2013   | 6                      |
| Organization B                                    | February 19, 2013   | 9                      |
| Organization C                                    | February 6, 2013    | 6                      |
| Organization D                                    | February 20, 2013   | 4                      |
| *Organization E                                   | February 7, 2013    | 7                      |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                                   |                     | <b>32</b>              |
| <b>TOTAL (Number of BLOOM youth Participants)</b> |                     | <b>25</b>              |

\*Findings from Organization E were not included in the report as the youth participants were not “system-involved” as defined by the BLOOM Initiative.

- d) *Key Informant Interviews* – In addition to working with the community partners to assess the effectiveness of BLOOM Initiative efforts, the UCLA evaluation team also conducted interviews with key community stakeholders to assess both knowledge and awareness of the BLOOM Initiative as well as establishing a baseline for community involvement in this effort. There was outreach to two categories of stakeholders: (1) Key Informants from government and philanthropic foundations, (2) Key Informants from non-profit programs and community-based organizations. An initial list of 14 individuals was compiled jointly by the UCLA Evaluation Team and BLOOM Initiative Director Robert Lewis. Along with these stakeholder lists, the UCLA team, in consultation with Robert Lewis, devised a series of open-ended questions and probes, attached to this report (see Appendix F). These questions were designed to stimulate a discussion with the stakeholders and to determine their knowledge of the BLOOM Initiative, their thoughts on the needs of probation system-involved youth, and their ideas regarding significant supports and outcomes for the BLOOM Initiative. Two members of the evaluation team conducted a total of eight stakeholder interviews, lasting from 30-45 minutes each. The interviews took place during the month of February 2013, and notes were made and compared after the interviews. (Please see Appendix G for a summary of stakeholder responses).

### **Description of Quantitative Data Collection & Process**

In an effort to streamline quantitative data collection among the five BLOOM direct-service partners, representatives from each organization were asked to collect and provide information about BLOOM youth participants on a monthly basis. Beginning in October 2012, BLOOM partner organizations were required to collect *Monthly Data Reports*. The primary goals of the “Monthly Data Reports” were to document key changes among a BLOOM youth participant throughout his participation in the BLOOM initiative, and to assist with assessing “real time” progress.

<sup>8</sup> With the exception of Organization E, all of the BLOOM youth focus groups were conducted by UCLA Evaluation team members, Charles Lea and Samarah Blackmon during the month of February 2013. Dr. Tyrone Howard led the youth focus group at Organization E.

### *Monthly Data Reports*

Monthly data reports were sent electronically to the five direct service partners on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Each service partner was then required to complete and return a report to the evaluation team by the 30<sup>th</sup> of that same month. To ensure each BLOOM participant's information remained confidential, the partner organizations were required to develop a unique identification number for each BLOOM participant. These identification numbers include the initials of each organization, followed by the date of birth for the BLOOM participant. For example, if the name of the organization is the California Community Foundation and the participant's birthday May 25, 1997, the BLOOM participant's unique identification number is CCF052597.

In conjunction with CCF and the BLOOM partners, the UCLA evaluation team developed a list of key variables that encompasses the monthly data reports. There are three sections of the report, collecting: 1) demographic information about each participant, 2) baseline/status information about youth participant's status prior to BLOOM, and 3) current information about the participants. (See Appendix B).

- **Section One** of the report includes demographic information about each participant, such as his date of birth, enrollment date, place of residence, and referral source.
- The **second section** of the report, "Baseline/Status prior to BLOOM," captures a variety of information about each participant, such as the most recent grade completed, school attendance prior to enrolling in BLOOM, number of school credits obtained to date, employment history, and probation status. Information in sections one and two remain unchanged, as partner organizations are required to enter this information for each BLOOM participant they enroll. For participants already enrolled, partner organizations are required to retroactively enter this information.
- The **third section** of the monthly tracking report, "Current BLOOM Status," includes information similar to section two, but requires BLOOM direct service partners to track recent and up-to-date information for each participant. In section three, BLOOM partners collected information, such as the participant's job status, living arrangement/residence, and offense and BLOOM status. While section one and two of the Monthly Data Report remain unchanged, once the data has been entered however, each organization is required to update section three on a monthly basis for each BLOOM participant they continue to serve.

### *Mid-Course Corrections to Quantitative Data Collection*

Midway through the first year of the grant, several changes were made to the quantitative data collection process. After submitting data reports to the evaluation team on January 31, 2013, monthly data reports were suspended to address two changes. First, three new data points were added requiring service partners submit tracking reports on a quarterly rather than monthly basis. The three additional data points include: 1) number of credits earned for high school completion, 2) number of college credits completed, and 3) is this a new offense? Below we've provided detailed information on each of these three new data points:

- **Number of credits earned for HS completion.** This data point asks direct-service partners to provide the number of high school credits each participant has earned towards high school completion. For the report ending April 30, 2013, service partners were asked to document this information for existing and newly enrolled partners, and to update this information on each report moving forward. If there are no changes in the number of high school credits a participant has received between the submission of tracking reports, this number is to remain the same.
- **Number of college credits completed.** In addition to credits earned towards high completion, direct service partners were now required to document college credits earned, as some participants have and will graduate from high school and enroll in a post-secondary education program throughout the five-year grant period. If there are no changes in the number of college credits a BLOOM participant has enrolled in between the submission of quarterly reports, this number is to remain the same.
- **Is this a new offense?** If a BLOOM participant has violated his probation sentence, this data point will assist with determining if he has been convicted of a new offense. Direct service partners are therefore required to select “Yes” or “No” from the dropdown options in the tracking report to specify if the violation was for a new offense or not.

In addition to the three new data points, one change was made to an existing data point. On the initial data tracking report, the data point “re-offended” was included to track if a BLOOM participant recidivated or not. However, given varying definitions for re-offending/recidivism, this data point was updated to reflect probation violations. That is, the revised data point is now named “Violated?” in which service partners are required to select “Yes” or “No” dropdown options to specify if a participant has violated the guidelines of his probation sentence.

#### *Transition from Monthly to Quarterly Data Reports*

Because of the limited change in the status of BLOOM youth on a monthly basis, the evaluation team recommended moving from a monthly submission to a quarterly submission of the tracking reports. As mentioned, the monthly tracking reports were suspended on January 30, to revise the form. Once the updates were made, the next tracking report in which the partner organizations completed, were due on May 15, 2013. In this report, the partners collected participant-level data through April 30, 2013. The data collected, included the new and revised data points discussed above. The final data report for year one of the grant, is due on July 15, 2013, for data collected through May and June 30, 2013. However, participant-level data from May and June 2013, are not included in this report.

Beginning in July 2013, BLOOM data reports will be requested by and submitted to the UCLA evaluation team on a quarterly basis. Thus, the first data report for the new grant/program year will be due on October 15, 2013. This report will include participant data collected during the months of July, August, and September of 2013, in addition to data collected from the beginning of the grant through June 30, 2013. Moving from a monthly to a quarterly report will also provide a smooth transition to include the year two BLOOM partners who will be brought on board in July 2013, on the same schedule as the current partners. This will allow the evaluation



team to document meaningful changes among BLOOM participants. The following table provides an overview of the data tracking report due dates for the 2013 fiscal/program year:

**Table 3: BLOOM Youth Data Tracking Report Due Dates, 2013-2014**

| Quarter | Months                           | Data Report Due Date |
|---------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1       | July, August, September 2013     | October 15, 2013     |
| 2       | October, November, December 2013 | January 15, 2014     |
| 3       | January, February, March 2014    | April 15, 2014       |
| 4       | April, May, June 2014            | July 15, 2014        |

#### **IV. BLOOM Initiative Program Models**

##### **BLOOM Program Models by Community Partner**

In the first year of the BLOOM Initiative, five direct-service organizations selected for funding had a programmatic or organizational mission aligned with the BLOOM goal: to create educational and employment opportunities for Black male youth ages 14-18, who are involved with the LA County probation department. A description of BLOOM programs and services, as provided by each of the partner organizations, is included below. It is important to note here that programmatic information was collected from: a) the data assessment meetings in July 2012, b) the capacity building interviews in November 2012, and c) from BLOOM youth reflections shared during the focus groups in February 2013. Additionally, regardless of which BLOOM partner is providing services, or the program model, youth receive one or more of the following supports:

- Academic support
- Assistance with identifying a career path and development of the necessary skills toward that path
- An environment that promotes accountability and personal responsibility
- Cultural responsive and appropriate services
- Exposure to new opportunities and life experiences that stimulate educational and career aspirations

In response, youth and their families fully commit to participate in the partner organization’s BLOOM program by attending activities, providing school reports, identifying career aspirations, and making themselves readily available. As such, the number of youth participating in BLOOM partner programs was collected from the most recent tracking report, as of April 30, 2013, of which a total of 174 youth participated in BLOOM partner programs in the first year. Please refer to the results and findings section for an overview of the services provided by

Liberty Hill Foundation and LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS, as well as an in-depth assessment of the services provided.

### *BLOOM Direct-Service Partner Programs*

- *Brotherhood Crusade* – Brotherhood Crusade’s BLOOM program began in April 2012, growing out of their “Male by Birth, Man by Choice” mentoring program. Over the last year, 86 system-involved Black male youth have been paired with adult mentors while engaging in an 18-month program focused on educational and employment support and training, as well as personal development and self-actualization. BLOOM youth participate in a variety of activities focused on personal growth prior to being placed in an apprenticeship, internship, and/or employment opportunity. Brotherhood Crusade/BLOOM activities range from a sports-based program, such as a basketball league in which the young men are purposefully taught about team work and overcoming hardships, to camping trips in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, golf outings, the BET Awards, and a Gala at the Beverly Hilton hotel, among others. As one young man said during the youth focus group, “everything they [Brotherhood Crusade] do builds you for a great future.”
- *Community Coalition (CoCo)* – In contrast to more traditional program models in which programs and services are designed to support youth toward improved outcomes, Community Coalition seeks to engage BLOOM participants in community organizing efforts. Their goal, to train BLOOM youth as social change agents through involvement with their community organizing initiatives and leadership development training. During the first year of the BLOOM Initiative, a total of nine (9) youth participated in the Community Coalition’s BLOOM program. However the programmatic structure and/or policy issue in which organizing efforts were targeted remain unclear. Due to this, a recommendation has been included for each direct-service organization to provide an overview of their BLOOM program, goals, and processes. Please see the recommendations section for additional information.
- *Los Angeles Urban League (LAUL)* – Similar to Brotherhood Crusade, youth participants of the Urban League are paired with an adult mentor, with a focus on career-based mentoring. Through a partnership with Crenshaw High School, the young men participate in weekly meetings at the school, where they engage difficult topics and discuss educational challenges and successes under the guidance of community-based mentors and LAUL staff. For example, during the focus group with LAUL youth, one young man shared that his LAUL mentor had exposed him to a syllabus and the SAT, sharing that he felt he was being prepared to attain a college degree. Another young man expressed that he appreciated the connections he was able to make with “successful” adults through LAUL, stating “they know people all around,” and “if you know someone from the Urban League, you know a lot of people.” In addition to mentorship, the young men participate in a number of activities and programs including the Fire Academy and LAUL sponsored events. The participants of LAUL/BLOOM began the program between November 2012, and February 2013, and a total of 40 BLOOM youth participated in the first year.

- *Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)*- Similar to CoCo, the Youth Justice Coalition seeks to develop BLOOM youth as leaders and community organizers, providing the tools, support, and resources necessary to combat policies that are harmful to Black male youth, their families, and their communities. YJC youth participate in a number of campaigns and organizing efforts, and are trained through YJC’s organizing and movement history curriculum training. In addition, each campaign’s core leaders receive mentorship. As a part of the YJC/BLOOM program, 31 youth were actively engaged in the decision-making, development, and implementation of programs and policy campaigns.
- *Youth Mentoring Connection (YMC)* – YMC is a comprehensive 9-month mentorship program in which youth are paired with an adult mentor, with the goal to support participants toward apprenticeships and job training opportunities. Initially, YMC planned to intersperse BLOOM participants among their 11 youth cohorts. However, because YMC had to develop new relationships with schools and probation officers in BLOOM service areas - an area they had not served prior - the resulting “BLOOM cohort” was comprised of all system-involved youth, and began in November 2012. As of April 30, a total of 8 youth have participated in the YMC/BLOOM mentoring program. As a part of the program, the young men participate in workshops and activities, such as camping trips, bowling outings, and a college expo. During the focus group with YMC youth, the young men said that they felt “comfortable” in the space. As an example, one of the participants shared a specific activity in which the young men had to express and discuss their opinions as a group on difficult topics. He shared how YMC staff encouraged him to share his real opinion, providing a space in which he did not feel “judged.” The young man shared this example because as he said it was an opportunity in which he felt free to express himself. The participants of the YMC mentoring program are referred directly by a probation officer, a relationship YMC staff have built over the last year.

## **V. Results & Findings**

In this section of the report, we provide an overview of the findings from year one of the BLOOM Initiative, based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected in year one. The qualitative results are framed to provide an assessment and progress toward the initial BLOOM key strategy areas, as this was the initial frame in which data was collected. These include: 1) policy advocacy, 2) strategic messaging, 3) direct service, and 4) organizational capacity building. The quantitative data will specifically address the revised core strategy to increase educational and job opportunity for BLOOM youth.

In the first year of the Initiative, the data collected allowed for an assessment of three of the four strategy areas, direct service, organizational capacity building, and strategic messaging. The fourth strategy, policy advocacy, cannot be addressed based on the data collected this year. However, in the mid-year evaluation report (December 2012), it was recommended that BLOOM launch a singularly focused advocacy campaign, in effort to link direct practice efforts on the part of BLOOM partners to systems change. In year two of the grant, BLOOM in collaboration with the Youth Justice Coalition and Community Coalition will implement this recommendation.

As such, the results discussed in this report provide an assessment of progress in three of the four key strategy areas.

**Result 1: BLOOM Youth Participation**  
*Bloom Strategy Area 3 - Direct Service*

*BLOOM Youth Participants (BLOOMers)*

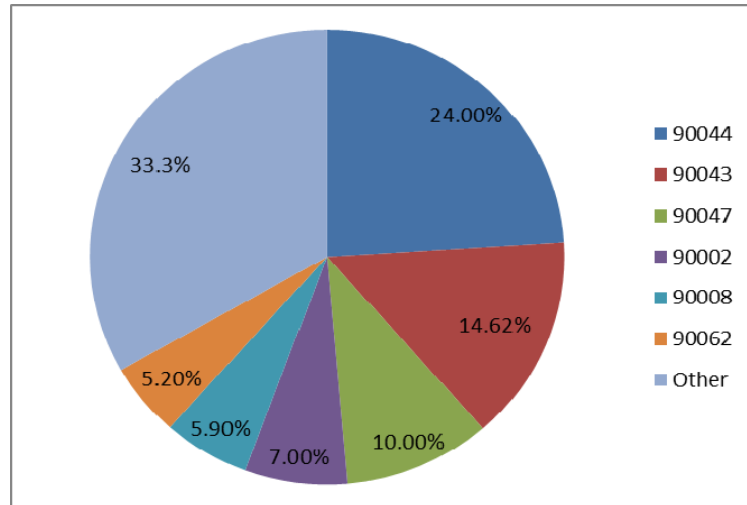
As of April 30, 2013, 174 young men were enrolled in BLOOM Initiative programs provided by the five community-based organizations. Among the 174 enrolled BLOOMers, 91.4% were active, in that they were receiving services from one of the five partner organizations, and had not exited the program. As displayed in Table 4, you can see that almost half (48.5%) of the BLOOM youth participants are served by Brotherhood Crusade. This is followed by the Los Angeles Urban League who enrolled 23.4% of the BLOOM youth participants in the first year of the Initiative. Of the remaining organizations, Youth Justice Coalition enrolled and is serving 18.1% of BLOOM participants, and both Community Coalition and Youth Mentoring Connection are serving approximately five percent, 5.3% and 4.7%, respectively, as of April 30, 2013.

**Table 4: Number/Percent of BLOOMer's by Partner**

| <b>BLOOMers by Partner</b> | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>    |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Brotherhood Crusade        | 86         | 48.5%       |
| Community Coalition        | 9          | 5.3%        |
| Los Angeles Urban League   | 40         | 23.4%       |
| Youth Justice Coalition    | 31         | 18.1%       |
| Youth Mentoring Connection | 8          | 4.7%        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>174</b> | <b>100%</b> |

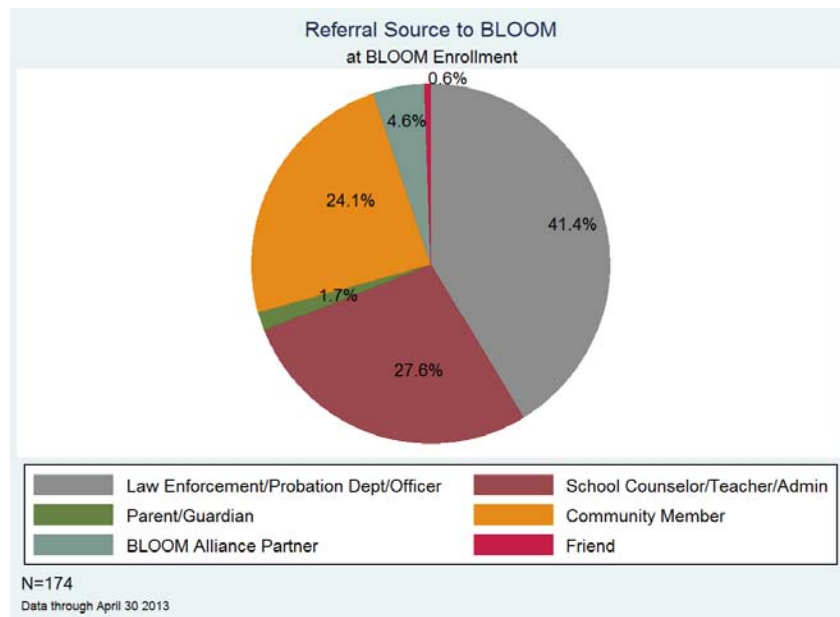
- *Areas of Service* - To better understand the geographic areas in South Los Angeles where BLOOM participants reside; direct-service partners collected and updated the zip code of each participant’s current residence. Among the 174 active and non-active BLOOM participants, 24.0% reported residing in the 90044 geographic area of South LA, followed by the 90043 geographic areas (14.62%). Other prominent geographic areas in South LA where BLOOM participants reported residing (10 or more participants) include: 90047 (10.0%), 90008 (5.9%), and 90002 (7.0%). Nine participants also reported living in the 90062. “Other” (33.3%) includes 21 zip codes participants reported living at enrollment. These zip codes are grouped together as six or less participants, and in some cases one participant, reported living in those areas. Overall, BLOOM participants reside in the South LA area, which is consistent with the target area and population CCF identified for the BLOOM Initiative.

**Chart 1: BLOOM Areas of Service**



- Participant Referral* - In addition to zip code data, BLOOM partner organizations also identified the referral source to for youth participants to their BLOOM programs. As displayed in Chart 2 below, a majority of BLOOM participants were referred to a law enforcement or probation officer/department (41.4%). This was followed by referrals made by a school counselor, teacher, or school administrator, of whom 27.6% of youth participants were referred to BLOOM programs. Referrals from community members accounted for 24.1% of the 174 BLOOM participants, followed referrals from one of the other BLOOM direct service providers (4.6%), parents/guardians (1.7%), or a friend (0.6%)

**Chart 2: Referral Source for BLOOM Youth, at Enrollment**



## DATA REPORT: Baseline and Current Status of BLOOM Participants<sup>9</sup>

Upon enrolling in the BLOOM Initiative, BLOOM direct service providers collected baseline data on each participant in various domain areas to assist with the development of a baseline portrait of BLOOM participants. In addition, direct service providers also collect “Current Status” data on active BLOOM participants they are serving. Service providers are required to provide up-to-date information for each participant in key domain areas, including education, employment and system involvement, each time they submit an updated data report to the evaluation team. Below we provide an overview of participant-level data in each domain area collected through April 30, 2013, identifying status changes in a few domain areas.

Before providing an overview of the baseline and current status of BLOOM participants in each domain areas, we first present the living arrangement/residence status of BLOOM participants. As displayed in Table 5 below, as of April 30, 2013, 67.2% of participants reported living in a single household headed by their birth mother, and 12.6% reported living with both of their birth parents. Several participants also reported living with extended family (6.3%), as well as with their grandparents (5.8%).

**Table 5: Living Arrangement/Residence of BLOOM Participants**

| <b>Living Arrangement/Residence</b> | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>    |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Both Birth Parents                  | 22         | 12.6%       |
| Extended Family                     | 11         | 6.3%        |
| Foster Family                       | 5          | 2.9%        |
| Grandparents                        | 10         | 5.8%        |
| Homeless                            | 1          | 0.57%       |
| Single Birth Father                 | 8          | 4.6%        |
| Single Birth Mother                 | 117        | 67.2%       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>174</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### *Educational Profile of BLOOM Participants*

- *School Status/Most Recent Grade Completed* – Given CCF’s focus on helping to improve the educational outcomes and opportunities for system-involved young Black men through the BLOOM initiative, in particular, through healthy, sustained relationships with positive adults, capturing baseline educational data on each BLOOM participant at enrollment is essential to determining their educational development throughout their participation in BLOOM. Thus, as displayed in Table 6, prior to enrolling in BLOOM, 25.9% of BLOOM participants reported eleventh grade as the most recent grade they completed, followed closely by tenth grade (20.7%). Ninth and twelfth grade were the next two more recent grades completed (14.9% and 14.4%) respectively, indicating that roughly three-fourths of BLOOM participants are enrolled in high school. As of April 30, 2013, the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders were the most commonly grades

<sup>9</sup> Data that was collected at baseline and current status is comparatively displayed in Appendix H.

completed among BLOOM participants. Eight and ninth grades were the next grades most commonly completed by BLOOM participants, 6.3% enrolled in a post-secondary education program, and 4.0% received their high school diploma. However, among the 174 participants, 9.2% were not enrolled in school as of the last reporting period.

**Table 6: School Status/Most Recent Grade Completed**

|                            | <b>Baseline Status</b> | <b>Current Status</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>School Status</b>       | <b>%</b>               | <b>%</b>              |
| 7th Grade                  | 6.9%                   | 4.0%                  |
| 8th Grade                  | 8.6%                   | 8.6%                  |
| 9th Grade                  | 14.9%                  | 8.6%                  |
| 10th Grade                 | 20.7%                  | 19.5%                 |
| 11th Grade                 | 25.9%                  | 19.5%                 |
| 12th Grade                 | 14.4%                  | 19.5%                 |
| Diploma Received           | 3.5%                   | 4.0%                  |
| Enrolled in Post-Secondary | 1.2%                   | 6.3%                  |
| GED Received               | 4.0%                   | 0.6%                  |
| Not Enrolled in School     | N/A                    | 9.2%                  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100%</b>            | <b>100%</b>           |

- School Attendance* – With regard to school attendance, prior to enrolling in BLOOM, a little more than half (55.2%) of the young men reported attending school on a regular basis. More than 26% of the participants attended school at least two to three days per week. Of the 174 BLOOM youth 12.6% reported they were not enrolled in school prior to starting BLOOM programs. In addition, more than half of BLOOM participants reported that they attended school regularly. While most BLOOM participants continued to attend school regularly as of April 30, 2013, the percentage of BLOOM participants not enrolled in school between January 31, 2013 and April 30, 2013 increased by 7.5 percentage points. Conversely, the percentage of BLOOM participants attending school sporadically as of April 30, 2013 decreased by 7.9 percentage points. In addition, the percentage of BLOOM participants rarely attending school increased slightly by a few percentage points.

**Table 7: School Attendance**

|                              | <b>Baseline Status</b> | <b>Current Status</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>School Attendance</b>     | <b>%</b>               | <b>%</b>              |
| Sporadically (2-3 Days/Week) | 26.4%                  | 18.5%                 |
| Rarely (4-6 Times/Month)     | 5.8%                   | 6.9%                  |
| Regularly (5 Days/Week)      | 55.2%                  | 54.3%                 |
| Not Enrolled                 | 12.6%                  | 20.2%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>100%</b>            | <b>100%</b>           |

- *Suspensions and Expulsions* – In regards to suspension/expulsion data, there have been substantial changes with regards to school suspensions and expulsions. For instance, as of April 30, 2013 only 2.3% of BLOOM participants were reported as being suspended, a 44.8 percentage point decrease from the baseline data, and 2.9% were expelled, a 20.7 percentage point decrease.

**Table 8: Suspended/Expelled?**

|                            | <b>Baseline Status</b> | <b>Current Status</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Suspended/Expelled?</b> | <b>%</b>               | <b>%</b>              |
| Expelled                   | 23.6%                  | 2.9%                  |
| Suspended                  | 47.1%                  | 2.3%                  |
| No                         | 29.3%                  | 94.8%                 |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>100.0%</b>          | <b>100.0%</b>         |

- *Average Credits Earned* - In regards to the number of credits earned towards high school completion, at baseline the average number of middle and/or high school credits participants reported earning is 97.7. As of April 30, 2013, the average number of credits earned increased slightly from an average of 97.73 to 123.0<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the average college credits earned among BLOOM participants was 0.94<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 9: Average Credits Earned towards High School Completion**

|                       | <b>Average</b>   |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Baseline</b>       | 97.73  |
|                       | Number of Completed Middle and/or High School Credits Prior to BLOOM |
| <b>Current Status</b> | 123.01   |
|                       | High School Credits Earned   |
|                       | 0.94   |
|                       | College Credits Earned   |

*Employment Profile of BLOOM Participants*

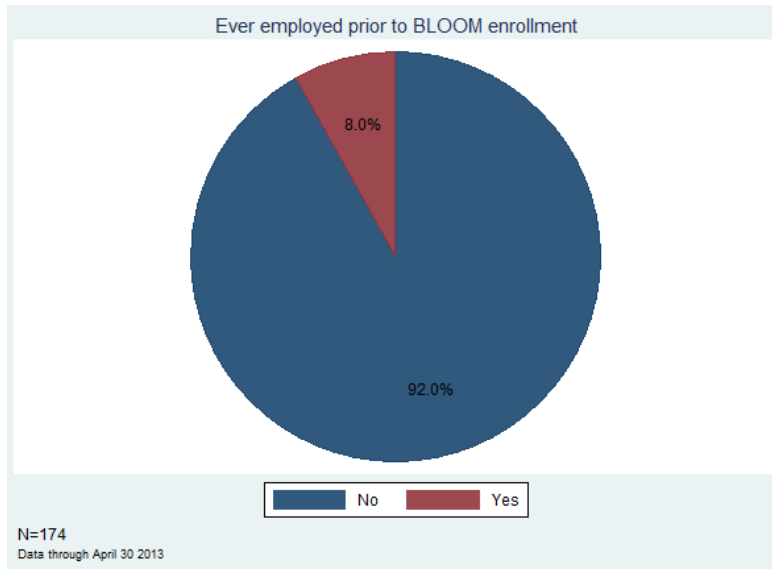
In addition to tracking the ways in which BLOOM youth participate in school as measured by attendance, the partner organizations were also asked to collect employment data of BLOOM participants at enrollment and throughout their participation in the BLOOM Initiative. In particular, the young men were asked about their participation in the workforce, of which 92% of BLOOM participants reported “never being employed” prior to their enrollment in BLOOM programs.

<sup>10</sup> N = 158 and SD = 189.5 for high school credits earned.

<sup>11</sup> N = 90 and SD = 5.94 for college credits earned.

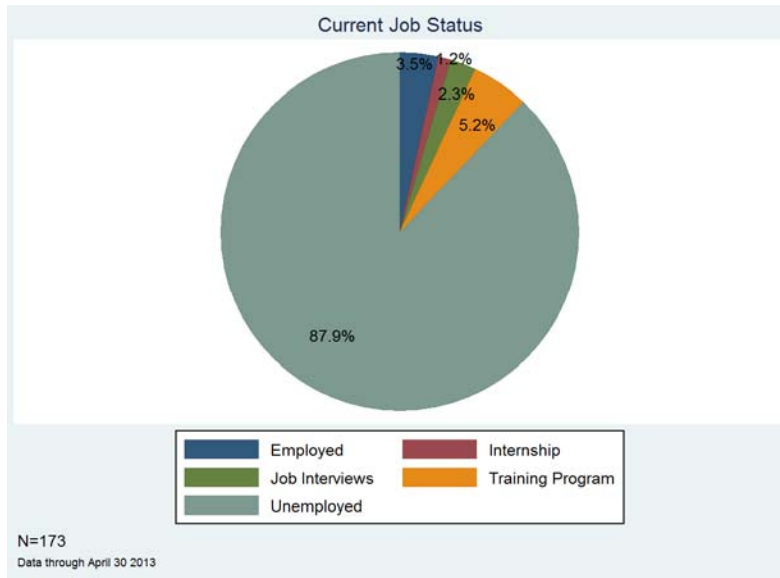


**Chart 3: Ever Employed Prior to BLOOM Enrollment?**



As of April 30, 2013, direct service providers reported that 87.9% of participants were unemployed. However, a few participants were engaged in employment (3.5%), and a few others were also engaged in some type of training program (5.2%), attending job interviews (2.31%), or participating in an internship (1.2%). Additionally, 32% of the 25 participants engaging in some type of work-related activity (i.e. employed or internship), reported working more than 20 hours per week.

**Chart 4: Current Job Status as of April 30, 2013**



*“System Involvement” of BLOOM Youth*

As described above, “system involvement” refers to youth who are or have been under the supervision of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. In regards to involvement with the juvenile justice system, 60.1% of participants had been ordered to a probation camp, juvenile detention, or training or other type of juvenile correction facility prior to enrolling in BLOOM. As of April 30, 2013, only 16.1% of participants had been ordered to a probation camp, juvenile detention, or training or other type of juvenile correction facility, which is a 44 percentage point decrease.

**Table 10: Ever been ordered to probation camp, juvenile detention, training school or other type of juvenile correctional facility?**

|  | Baseline Status | Current Status |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Ever been ordered to probation camp, juvenile detention, training school or other type of juvenile correctional facility?</b> | <b>%</b>        | <b>%</b>       |
| No   | 39.9%           | 83.9%          |
| Yes  | 60.1%           | 16.1%          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100%</b>     | <b>100%</b>    |

- Probation Status and Supervision* – In regards to probation status and supervision, of the 174 participants, direct service providers reported that 64.4% were on probation at the time of enrollment and as of April 30, 2013. More specifically, and as displayed in Table 11, 65.5% had been order to formal probation supervision prior to enrolling in BLOOM, compared to 60.9% as of April 30, 2013. In addition, and 17.2% were ordered to informal supervision prior to enrolling in BLOOM, compared to 13.8% as of April 30, 2013. Roughly 25.3% of BLOOM participants were not on probation as of April 30, 2013, which is an 8.1 percentage point increase.

**Table 11: Type of Probation Supervision**

| <b>Type of Probation Supervision</b> <sup>12</sup> | <b>Baseline Status</b> | <b>Current Status</b> |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
|  | <b>%</b>               | <b>%</b>              |
| Formal Supervision                                 | 65.5%                  | 60.9%                 |
| Informal Supervision                               | 17.2%                  | 13.8%                 |
| Not on Probation                                   | 17.2%                  | 25.3%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>100%</b>            | <b>100%</b>           |

In addition to involvement with the probation department, information regarding Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was also collected. It was reported that 8.7% of BLOOM youth participants were involved with the DCFS, compared to 4.6 as of April 30, 2013, a 4.1 percentage point decrease.

**BLOOM Youth Perspectives: Involvement with Partner Organizations**

In February 2013, the UCLA evaluation team conducted five focus groups with BLOOM youth participants. During the focus groups, which took place at the sites of the BLOOM partner organizations, the young men engaged in lively conversations documenting their experiences and perspectives on BLOOM programming and service providers. The BLOOMers shared personal information about their experiences prior to participation in BLOOM – describing life as “stressful,” “difficult,” having “a lot of barriers,” and a “hard journey” – words and phrases repeated by youth across each of the focus groups. In addition, the young men shared their experiences as members of BLOOM programs, highlighting the strengths and challenges of the BLOOM programs as provided by the service organizations. Following are excerpts from four of the five focus groups conducted. As noted earlier, this evaluation does not include responses from youth participants of *Organization E*. Following are excerpts from the focus groups, in which the young men provide insights into their participation in BLOOM.

***Strengths of BLOOM Partner Organizations***

“[The organization] is not just putting people in a job, they’re putting people in a life”

- Youth Focus Group Participant

As the words above indicate – and as other youth repeatedly explained -- involvement with one of the BLOOM partner organizations provides more than an opportunity to attain a good job, it provides the opportunity to attain a life. This particular quote exemplifies the youth’s view of BLOOM partner programs as strengths and trusted resources providing safe, understanding, and supportive spaces for BLOOM youth. During focus groups, three programmatic/organizational strengths emerged from data analysis:

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<sup>12</sup> Formal probation requires that an offender register with the Adult Probation Department of the county where he/she will be assigned a probation officer who will supervise him/her throughout the probation sentence. Informal probation does not require registration or supervision.

**Table 12: BLOOM Programmatic Strengths  
(as identified by BLOOM youth participants)**

| Emerging Themes: BLOOM Programmatic Strengths |
|---|
| Mentors/Staff                                 |
| Opportunity and Exposure                      |
| Supportive Environment                        |

***Theme 1: Caring, Supportive, and Non-Judgmental Staff and Mentors are Critical to the Long-Term Participation and Engagement of BLOOM Youth***

In their focus group responses, youth were very clear that mentors and program staff connoted a primary strength of the partner programs. Within all of the focus groups, participants highlighted relationships with mentors and staff as critical to their continued participation and success in the programs. When discussing the category of program staff, the words “care,” “trust,” and “relatable” repeatedly emerged as youth described the most valuable traits possessed by individuals at each partner agency. These terms, among others, were used by youth at all of the focus groups, to describe their interactions and relationships with mentors and staff. For example, in one focus group a young man observed that mentors, “give themselves, so you give yourself.” In another example, a participant shared that he was initially apprehensive about joining the program, which he was “forced” to do by his probation officer. He said however, that after the first day when he walked in and was greeted by a staff member who said, “I only do hugs, gimme a hug,” he was almost immediately comfortable. “They show lots of love and affection,” the youth said, citing care and concern shown by staff as key to his continued participation in the program. This sentiment was echoed in another focus group where youth described their space as a place where there are “lots of smiles and hugs,” and where “everyone acknowledges you.” These remarks and others provided extensive support for the critical importance of caring and trustworthy staff for youth participants. In all of the focus groups, youth participants shared several examples of the ways in which they were able to relate to staff, feeling that staff and mentors understood their struggles as young Black males and knowing “where they come from.” They appreciated having access to mentors and staff that had grown up in the same neighborhoods, shared similar struggles, and who were now “successful.” Further, several youth expressed their appreciation of the opportunity to be themselves, which included being able to express themselves, and to talk openly about issues they were facing, noting that they felt safe in the partner spaces. From these focus groups, it can be unequivocally concluded that caring, supportive, non-judgmental, and understanding staff and mentors are critical to the long-term participation and engagement of BLOOM youth.

***Theme 2: Experiential Opportunities and Exposure are Important to BLOOM youth***

Youth identified experiential learning opportunities as an important strength of the BLOOM partner organizations. Several focus group participants from differing organizations highlighted

how they were exposed to opportunities that they would not otherwise be able to experience had they not participated in the BLOOM program. Youth in every focus group discussed the non-academic activities that helped to “open” their minds and broaden their horizons, including camping trips, internships, galas, golf, travel, bowling, movies, and college fairs. In addition, youth in two focus groups noted that exposure to successful adults as speakers proved to be meaningful. The speakers had grown up in situations similar to the lives of BLOOM youth and they had returned to share words of wisdom along with a relational connection. Youth valued the contact with influential adults through their participation in the social opportunities provided by BLOOM. As one youth summarized, “I love the resources, meeting people, and the different programs.”

### ***Theme 3: An Environment in which the Young Men feel Safe, Respected, and Supported is Crucial to their Participation in BLOOM Programs***

In all of the focus groups, youth emphasized the significance of the supportive environment provided by the BLOOM partner organizations. The notion of a supportive environment as provided through staff/mentor relationships, program and activity offerings, and through access to opportunity, represents an important success of the BLOOM partner organizations, as highlighted by both youth just beginning the program and those who have been participating long-term. In many cases, youth compared the atmosphere fostered within the partner organizations with the atmosphere in their schools, describing school as a difficult space characterized by the potential for harassment by both their peers and school police. Several youth described their need to constantly look over their shoulder, as well as the looming threat of receiving a ticket or other harsh penalties handed down for small infractions. These young men portrayed their school environment as “unwelcoming,” and several youth lamented that their teachers did not care about them. The characterization of their schooling experience as “stressful” further supports the notion that stress is identified by youth as a defining characteristic of their lives in school and as young men growing up in Los Angeles. In contrast, when describing participation with BLOOM partner organizations, the youth highlighted the many ways in which the environment was supportive, from caring staff/mentors, as described above, safe spaces free from threats of fighting and harassment, and in providing a setting in which the young men felt they were “not being judged,” they were “respected” and “treated as equals” by staff, mentors, and peers within the organization.

### ***Challenges of BLOOM Partner Organizations***

In each of the focus groups, the youth expressed appreciation for the opportunities and supports received as participants of the BLOOM program. During each of the four focus groups conducted, the youth were asked if they would change anything about the programs in which they were participants. In all of the focus groups, the young men said they would expand the program offerings to serve and help more young men like themselves. In addition, youth in several focus groups said they would expand the program so they themselves can participate in more activities throughout the week, instead of a just a few days a week<sup>13</sup>. Overall, young men in each of the four focus groups expressed praise for the program, in addition to identifying

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<sup>13</sup> Programmatic offerings for BLOOM youth vary at each of the partner organizations. Among the organizations, BLOOM program activities range from one-to-five days each week.

challenges and providing recommendations for individual programs that provide useful feedback for all of the partner organizations.

### *Youth Recommendations*

- In one focus group, youth noted that throughout their participation in the program they had met with several mentors which created their desire to have one, individual mentor assigned to them. Specifically, the youth in this focus group recommended changing the **mentor structure** to provide one assigned mentor, allowing for increased one-on-one interactions and in-depth support of individual students. Given the strong emergence of mentors as critical to the lives of youth participants, strengthening the mentor structure of organizations serving BLOOM youth is imperative.
- In another focus group, participants recommended that BLOOM partner organizations **collaborate with school athletic coaches**. One youth noted that athletes want to participate in the programs available, but oftentimes meeting dates conflict with their practice and game schedules. Participants in this focus group recommended that a representative from the organization speak directly to the coaches at the school to coordinate schedules to accommodate the competing demands placed on the students.
- In another focus group, the youth recommended the need to build a **concrete foundation**. That is, components of this particular program include a “youth-led” component, which means BLOOM programs are planned, organized, and implemented by the youth participants with only limited guidance from adult staff. The young men in this focus group discussed obstacles encountered as leaders of BLOOM programs, such as limited funding and lack of structure, thus making it difficult to successfully implement the programs in which they lead. Ultimately, the youth expressed a desire to be successful as group leaders and facilitators, while maintaining autonomy and receiving the guidance needed to successfully implement programs.
- Finally, across various focus groups, the youth recommended improvements to transportation and awards of appreciation for the young men. In addition, in several focus groups youth highlighted a need for the organizations to provide them with small amounts of money for necessities, such as food. When asked how much money they would need, the response was \$5-to-\$10 per week. “Just so we can have a little money in our pocket.”

### **Result 2: BLOOM Capacity Building Support**

#### ***BLOOM Strategy Area 4 – Organizational Capacity Building***

*Strengthening the organizational capacity of the BLOOM partner organizations* was identified as a key strategy to improve the educational and economic opportunities available to probation-involved, Black male youth. To support this effort, BLOOM provided each of the direct-service partners with training and support to strengthen organizational capacity, as defined by their development of a strategic, board, or fundraising development plan. Liberty Hill Foundation was contracted to support the capacity building efforts of each of the community-based organizations. Through a series of: a) assessments, b) capacity building trainings, c) one-on-one consulting, and

d) ongoing support by Liberty Hill representatives, the BLOOM partner organizations were supported in the development of one of the three – strategic, board, or fund –planning areas. It is important to note here that initially each organization was required to complete *all* three plans as a part of the Initiative’s capacity building efforts. However, due to funding constraints, the director of the BLOOM Initiative and the lead coordinator of Liberty Hill’s capacity building team agreed that the partner organizations would select and complete *one* of the *three* plans by the close of year two (April 2014). With the support of Liberty Hill, each organization chose to complete one plan that best fit their specific needs. The following section offers a brief overview of Liberty Hill’s capacity building efforts, as well as an assessment of these efforts emerging from analysis of qualitative interviews with the five partner organizations and Liberty Hill during the months of October and November 2012. Table 13 below lists the plan(s) each organization will focus on as a part of the Initiative’s capacity building efforts.

**Table 13: BLOOM Partner, Capacity Building Focus (2012-2014)**

| BLOOM Partner Organization       | Capacity Building Planning Focus Area |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Brotherhood Crusade              | Fund Development/Sustainability Plan  |
| Community Coalition (CoCo)       | Board/Sustainability Plan             |
| Los Angeles Urban League (LAUL)  | Planning for Transition               |
| Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)    | Fund Development                      |
| Youth Mentoring Connection (YMC) | Strategic Plan                        |

Following is a brief overview of Liberty Hill’s capacity building efforts, as well as an assessment of these efforts, as learned in qualitative interviews with the five direct-service organizations and Liberty Hill during the months of October and November 2012.

*Organizational Capacity Building with Liberty Hill*

In June and November 2012, members of the UCLA evaluation team met with Evelin Montes and Anthony Foster of Liberty Hill. During our initial meeting in June, the Liberty Hill team provided an overview of the capacity building program they would facilitate with the five direct-service organizations. In a later meeting (November 2012), the Liberty Hill team provided an update on completed and upcoming capacity building workshops, activities, and supports provided to the partner organizations. Table 14 summarizes the capacity building program, as planned and implemented by the Liberty Hill team:

**Table 14: BLOOM Capacity Building Efforts, Facilitated by Liberty Hill**

| Liberty Hill Capacity Building Program   | Date Completed  |
|--|---|
| 1. Assessment meeting with direct-service partner organizations  | May 29, 2012  |
| 2. Each organization completed the Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) by June 30, 2012.  | Completed by June 30, 2012  |
| 3. Liberty Hill conducted one-on-one meetings with each partner organization   | Ongoing   |
| 4. Capacity Building Trainings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="365 684 873 747">○ <u>Workshop 1</u>: Evaluating the Impact of Your Organization’s Programs</li> <li data-bbox="365 779 883 842">○ <u>Workshop 2</u>: Developing a Fundraising Plan, Is Your Organization Ready?</li> <li data-bbox="365 873 906 936">○ <u>Workshop 3</u>: Nonprofit Boards and Their Role in Fundraising.</li> </ul> | Workshop 1: November 14, 2012<br>Workshop 2: January 16, 2013<br>Workshop 3: March 13, 2013 |
| 5. Specialized Partner Training (Consultants)  | September 2012 - March 2013   |

- *Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT)* – Evelin Montes of Liberty Hill met with representatives from each of the BLOOM direct-service organizations in May 2012, to assess their capacity for organizational growth and development. During these meetings, Liberty Hill requested each BLOOM partner complete the Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) by June 30, 2012. The CCAT measures: a) adaptive, b) leadership, c) management, and d) technical capacities of an organization, and was selected as a tool to both assess organizational capacity and to inform the training track of the BLOOM capacity building trainings. Each of the five direct-service partners completed the CCAT. However early challenges emerged that made it difficult to incorporate CCAT findings into capacity building efforts. The primary challenge, a disconnect between the areas identified for capacity building by the BLOOM Initiative – strategic planning, fundraising and board development – and the organization’s needs as identified from the CCAT results and/or the partner’s own organizational assessments. This, and other identified challenges with the CCAT are detailed below.
- *Capacity Building Workshops* – As highlighted, Liberty Hill selected the CCAT to inform the capacity building training in which the BLOOM partners would participate. Based on CCAT results and the partner’s own organizational assessments, Liberty Hill



created a three-workshop, capacity building training<sup>14</sup>. Appendix F provides a detailed overview on each of the workshops. However, the topics of the three trainings include: a) program evaluation b) development of a fundraising plan, and c) the role of non-profit boards in fundraising. The workshops took place between November 2012, and March 2013. It is important to again highlight that the qualitative interviews to assess the capacity building efforts took place in November 2012, providing limited insight as to the usefulness and effectiveness of the capacity building trainings for BLOOM partners.

- *Specialized Partner Training (Consultants)* – Liberty Hill paired each direct-service agency with a consultant. The role of the consultant was to support the BLOOM partner organization, up to 20-hours, in the completion of one of the three areas identified for capacity building - strategic planning, fundraising, or board development. For consultant selection, Liberty Hill compiled a list of potential consultants, many of whom had previous working relationships with the partner organizations and/or an expertise working with community organizations. Liberty Hill then worked with each organization to select a consultant who would best fit the needs of the agency and enhance their efforts for organizational capacity building. Although the consultants played an important role in achieving the capacity building goals, Liberty Hill representatives highlight that the limited hours in which consultants would work with the partners (20-hours per project year) posed a challenge to the completion of the planning efforts. As with the workshops, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the consultant in the BLOOM capacity building efforts, as the consultant match for the partner organizations was in process, or had just been completed at the time the capacity building interviews in November 2012. At that time, none of the partners had begun working with their consultant, outside of initial meetings to assess the organizations capacity for growth and development. Due to funding limitations, consultants will no longer be provided as part of BLOOM’s capacity building efforts in year two.

### **Assessment of Capacity Building Efforts**

As indicated, in October and November 2012, the UCLA evaluation team met with BLOOM’s five direct-service partners and Liberty Hill to assess the Initiative’s capacity building efforts. As part of the qualitative interview process, representatives from each organization were asked several questions designed to assess the services provided through BLOOM’s capacity building efforts (refer to Appendix C for interview protocol). Generally, each organization was asked to discuss: a) capacity building resources or technical assistance and their degree of helpfulness to date; b) challenges encountered as a partner in the BLOOM Initiative; c) capacity building assistance and working relationship with Liberty Hill; and d) areas where further capacity building is needed. After the interviews were completed, the UCLA evaluation team reviewed content and field notes from each interview, coding for themes in each of the four areas noted above. Based on this, key findings will be considered in detail.

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<sup>14</sup> Initially, Liberty Hill planned a four-workshop capacity building training. However, because of challenges faced by BLOOM partner organizations, such as late start-dates for BLOOM programs, Liberty Hill in collaboration with BLOOM Director Robert Lewis decided on a three-workshop training for the Year One capacity building efforts.

Overall, the partners were pleased with the services provided by Liberty Hill. Each of the organizations' BLOOM representatives reported being satisfied with their interactions, and Liberty Hill's attention to detail and communication. With the exception of one organization, all of the partners expressed the belief that they were well matched with their consultants, stating that they were looking forward to working with them over the next few months. In their anticipation of future work, early challenges were identified. The most significant challenge, described by four of the five partners was based primarily on a "disconnect" between the capacity building assistance being provided and their actual capacity building needs as assessed by the CCAT or by the organizations themselves. In other words, per Initiative guidelines, Liberty Hill focused on strategic planning, fundraising, and board development, however, BLOOM partners indicated there were more significant needs, detailed below. While this emerged as the most significant theme from analysis the qualitative interviews, several additional themes emerged as well. The following portion of the report discusses the successes, challenges, and recommendations that emerged for both a) capacity building efforts and b) the overall BLOOM Initiative partnership.

## **Perspectives from BLOOM Partner Organizations on Capacity Building Efforts**

### *Themes of Success*

- **Communication** – All of the partners offered positive insights about the effectiveness of Liberty Hill's communication, noting that they were very responsive to the partners and their needs. For example, one partner described an issue of timing that had arisen when they learned that their selected consultant would be away for five weeks during the months of November and December 2012. As soon as Liberty Hill was informed of the problem, they immediately reached out to the organization and resolved the schedule conflict, ultimately partnering them with a different consultant. In another interview, another partner credited Liberty Hill with "over-communicating," going on to say that Liberty Hill was very clear in their communication and committed to meeting the partner's needs.
- **Consultants** – With the exception of one organization (noted in section on "consultant challenge" below), each partner expressed excitement about the consultants identified to work with their organization. Prior to selection, Liberty Hill provided each organization with a list of potential consultants. Most of the partners were able to select an individual they had worked with before, or someone they felt would assist and "push" them in an area in which they had an identified need. One organization is seeking additional funding to supplement the 20 consultant hours provided through the grant.
- **Organizational Buy-In and Trust** – All of the partners expressed their overall sense of "trust" in Liberty Hill. They felt very comfortable reaching out to express both their praise and concern about various aspects of the Initiative and its ongoing organizational processes. Liberty Hill was viewed as a valued component of the BLOOM Initiative.

## *Challenges and Concerns*

- **Disconnect in Capacity Building Needs** – Although the partners expressed appreciation for the capacity building support provided as part of the BLOOM Initiative, four of the five partners indicated that the areas identified for capacity building – strategic planning, fundraising and board development - are *not* aligned with the needs identified as part of the CCAT results and/or the partner’s own organizational assessments. As one partner explained that there appeared to be a supposition that the organizations do programming well, but that they are not organizationally strong, adding, “There is an assumption that we’re field experts and not experts in the back room.” In addition, each of these four partners noted that the disconnect between the three capacity building areas identified through BLOOM and the capacity building needs identified by the CCAT results presented a challenge because the partner organizations are not able to address some of their opportunities/needs, and were instead required to focus on areas in which they already felt strong and/or have a well developed plan in place.
- **Organizational Life-Cycle & Readiness** – Each of the five partner organizations are in vastly different places with regard to their organizational structure and readiness, which shapes their organizational needs. The major differences between each of the organizations (e.g. budgets, culture, and so forth), has complicated the effort to establish the baseline for training. Some partner organizations need infrastructure support while others require support for programmatic enhancement.
- **Appropriate Individuals and Resources for the Training Table** - Two of the partner organizations mentioned the importance of getting “the right people at the training table.” Specifically, they mentioned a need for participants who possess: a) decision-making power; b) ability to be thought-partners; and/or c) responsibility for specific capacity building area(s) at the individual agencies, to be present at the capacity building sessions. In some cases, it appears the capacity building workshops were attended by individuals who may not possess the “power” to implement the changes at the organizational level.

### **Result 3: BLOOM’s Strategic Messaging Campaign** ***BLOOM Strategy Area 2 - Strategic Messaging***

A third strategy area identified by the BLOOM Initiative as important to improving opportunities for BLOOM youth is a strategic messaging campaign in which *positive messaging about redemption of youth and success stories are highlighted*. To achieve this goal, BLOOM selected LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS as its strategic messaging partner. The primary objective(s) of the Year One messaging campaign, as defined by representatives of LAGRANT was to: a) generate awareness, understanding, and support for the BLOOM Initiative, b) generate awareness of, and concern for the challenges facing system-involved Black male youth and recognition of their asset potential, and c) influence reporting on and portrayals of system-involved Black male youth by media organizations and BLOOM-related efforts.

In June 2012, the evaluation team met with staff at LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS to discuss their BLOOM data collection strategy plan. At that time, it was evident that LAGRANT had a clear strategy in place around messaging for the BLOOM Initiative that included print, radio,

television, and social media campaigns. With respect to evaluation however, both LAGRANT and the evaluation team recognized that there are not sufficient funds to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the *impact* of the messaging campaign. Therefore the evaluation for LAGRANT focuses primarily on process. As a result for the first year of the BLOOM strategic messaging efforts, this evaluation documents the early implementation of the strategy proposed by LAGRANT, assessing whether there was fidelity to the planned strategies.

#### *LAGRANT Objectives for the BLOOM Strategic Messaging Campaign<sup>15</sup>*

To increase community knowledge of the BLOOM Initiative, LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS launched a print, radio, television, and social media campaign with the following objectives:

- To build awareness and interest in BLOOM among South Los Angeles residents, particularly within the African American community and among faith-based organizations.
- Expand support of BLOOM by creating awareness of the role and efforts of community-based nonprofit partners.
- To create mutually beneficial bridges between CCF and businesses to advance the goals of BLOOM related to employment, education, and mentoring opportunities for Black male youth in Los Angeles.

The BLOOM media campaign as facilitated by LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS sought to: a) secure media coverage for BLOOM events, b) to facilitate outreach to faith based organizations and the business community, c) to launch a social media campaign through Facebook, Twitter, and the IamBLOOM.com website, and d) an advertising campaign. Below is an overview of what LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS implemented in each of the four strategy areas.

#### *a) Media Coverage for BLOOM Events* - In the first year of the Initiative, LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS secured media coverage for two BLOOM events.

- The first event, the “Saving Our Sons” Town Hall, in which the BLOOM Initiative officially launched, took place at Los Angeles Trade Technical College in May 2012. For this event LAGRANT secured nine (9) print media placements, 40 online media placements, and two (2) broadcast radio interviews.
- The second event, coordinated by LAGRANT and hosted by the California Community Foundation, was the BLOOM Media Luncheon, taking place in April 2013. The purpose of the event was to update local and national media on BLOOM’s achievements since its launch. The luncheon included a roundtable discussion with a panel that included Robert Lewis, the BLOOM Initiative Director, Actor Larenz Tate, BLOOM spokesperson, Anthony Smith, BLOOM Youth/Brotherhood Crusade, and Karim Webb, A BLOOM hiring partner and franchise owner of Buffalo Wild Wings. Terri Dixon, senior account executive with LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS moderated the discussion. Media in

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<sup>15</sup> LAGRANT Communications’ “BLOOM 2012-2013, Wrap-Up Report” served as the primary source for the assessment of BLOOM’s strategic messaging campaign.

attendance included: EURweb, Los Angeles Sentinel, Los Angeles Times, Rolling Out Magazine, and Sunday Morning Live.

- b) *Outreach* – In the first year of the Initiative, LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS worked with CCF/BLOOM to outreach to faith-based organizations and the business community as a part of their strategic messaging campaign. To assist in the outreach efforts, LAGRANT secured the following:
- Faith Based Organizations – Secured a meeting with AME Ministry Alliance, and as a result BLOOM Initiative representatives were able to deliver presentations at three Los Angeles churches where they informed members about BLOOM and the Saving Our Sons event.
  - Business Community Outreach –
    - BLOOM Media Luncheon - Secured representatives from the business community to attend the BLOOM Luncheon. Attendees included members of the Employment Development Department, the President of American CareGivers, the Regional Area Director for the Los Angeles City Community Development Department, and franchise owners, among a number of representatives of small businesses.
    - BLOOM Convening Event - Representatives from the LA Chamber of Commerce, the African American Chamber of Commerce, and Macy's among others attended the BLOOM convening event. (Please refer to Appendix G for a detailed overview of the business community outreach facilitated by LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS).
    - LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS worked to secure a partnership with the Metro Transit Authority (MTA) in which BLOOM youth would participate in a summer internship program.
- c) *Social Media Campaign* – The goals of the social media campaign were to: 1) create an engaged online community for BLOOM with more than 300 individuals, and 2) to increase views and subscriptions for BLOOM through interactive content uploaded on the CCF YouTube channel. In the first year of the Initiative, LAGRANT secured 202 Facebook likes. Successes and challenges of the social media campaign are highlighted below.
- d) *Advertising* – The final component of the BLOOM Strategic Messaging campaign utilized print and radio advertising to achieve message delivery that supported the launch of BLOOM, and to drive awareness of BLOOM messages in a format that is consumed by approximately 90% of African Americans on a weekly basis. Based on LAGRANT's final report, there is limited information to adequately assess this strategy.

### **Assessment of Strategic Messaging Campaign**

The evaluation of the BLOOM strategic messaging campaign focuses on process, rather than the *impact* of the strategic messaging campaign. In the first year of the Initiative, LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS successfully coordinated the BLOOM media campaign by implementing

the four-pronged strategy identified above. In the LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS Wrap-Up report, the following key successes and challenges were highlighted:

#### *BLOOM Strategic Messaging Successes*

- **Secured Media for BLOOM Events** – LAGRANT secured nine print media placements, 40 online media placements, and two radio broadcast interviews for the Saving Our Sons Town Hall in May 2012. In addition, LAGRANT coordinated the BLOOM Media Luncheon in which five media outlets attended.
- **Faith-Based Outreach** - Secured a meeting with the AME Ministry Alliance, which invited BLOOM representatives to deliver a presentation at three Los Angeles churches informing church members of the Town Hall meeting. In addition, LAGRANT secured a meeting with West Angeles Church of God in Christ to discuss the possibility of partnering with the BLOOM Initiative.
- **Business Community Outreach** - Secured the attendance of a number of representatives from the business community to attend the BLOOM Media Luncheon and the BLOOM Convening. In addition, LAGRANT secured a partnership with the Metro Transit Authority (MTA), where they offered internships to BLOOM youth.
- **Social Media** – In the first year of the strategic messaging campaign, LAGRANT identified three key areas that resulted in increased “likes” on Facebook. This includes, 1) posts from celebrity spokesperson Larenz Tate, 2) BLOOM posts which included photos or links to positive news coverage, and 3) posts between 5PM and 6PM received the greatest reach. Further, LAGRANT highlighted that the Facebook post highlighting the BLOOM Media Luncheon resulted in the greatest number of views (n=523).
- **Advertising** –LAGRANT communications highlighted a partnership cultivated with the *Los Angeles Wave Newspaper* as an important success in the first year. Through this partnership, LAGRANT secured: a) 40% discount on print advertising, b) a color ad at no additional charge for BLOOM ads, c) pro bono website advertisements at the *Los Angeles Wave*, *California Crusader*, and *Precious Times Magazine*, and d) secured a weekly column and internship opportunities for BLOOM youth with the *Los Angeles Wave Newspaper*.

#### *Strategic Messaging Challenges*

- **BLOOM Communications Plan** – LAGRANT highlighted several difficulties in implementing the BLOOM campaign plan. This included a recommendation by the CCF Marketing and Communications team to draft a communications plan for the Saving Our Sons event and not a BLOOM communications plan, which resulted in a gap of strategic direction from June through October, 2012. Further, communications plan submitted in October 2012 were not reviewed/approved until December 2012, making it difficult to implement a timely and effective campaign.
- **Social Media** – LAGRANT COMMUNICATIONS secured 202 “likes” on Facebook, 98 “likes” short of the goal for 300 members. In the Wrap-Up report they noted that

the Facebook page should have been announced at the SOS Town Hall. In addition, they recommended that Facebook posts need to be relevant to BLOOM and not just inundate BLOOM's page with accomplishments of other organizations.

- **Advertising** – The primary challenge to the BLOOM advertising strategy, as noted by LAGRANT, is that the creative concepts submitted to CCF were not used. Which they highlight could have helped to raise BLOOM's profile. In addition to this challenge, it is difficult to assess the implementation of the advertising campaign. LAGRANT highlighted important partnerships cultivated with local newspapers that resulted in a reduce price for advertising. What is not included in the assessment however is a detailed discussion about how print and radio were used to deliver continuous messaging, nor did the assessment address the objective, to present BLOOM messages in a format this is consumed by approximately 90% of African Americans each week.

## **VI. Discussion**

At the outset of this report, it was highlighted that BLOOM seeks to identify and improve supports, conditions, and opportunities for probation-involved, Black male youth. While the Initiative hopes to answer broad questions regarding the opportunities available for system-involved youth, it is too early to determine progress made toward broader questions related to the conditions and supports available for youth on probation in Los Angeles County. In the first year however, a baseline portrait of BLOOM youth has been established with regard to their educational and employment status. Thus allowing the evaluation team to track the progress made toward BLOOM's core strategy and outcomes over the course of the Initiative. To achieve their core strategy - to increase educational and employment opportunity for BLOOM youth participants - the Initiative will support efforts that facilitate: a) the academic advancement of BLOOM youth resulting in high school completion and/or pursuit of post-secondary education, and b) that develop the skills of BLOOM youth leading to job readiness and/or the creation of a pipeline of employment opportunities for qualified youth. To assess progress made toward achieving these goals, Table 15 below provides baseline data with regard to the educational and employment status of BLOOM youth.

**Table 15: Progress toward the BLOOM Initiative Goals & Outcomes**

| <b>Core Strategy: Educational and Job Opportunity</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Tactic 1:</b> Supporting efforts that facilitate academic advancement for youth resulting in high school completion and/or pursuit of post-secondary education.  |   |
| <b>Outcomes/Indicators:</b>   | <b>Assessment:</b>  |
| <p><b><u>Short-term outcome:</u></b> Increased number of BLOOM youth enrolled in school full-time.</p> <p><b><u>Indicator:</u></b> 80% of system-involved BLOOM youth participants enrolled in high school or post-secondary learning</p>   | <p><i>Upon enrollment in BLOOM</i> - the data reveal 12.6% of BLOOM youth were not enrolled in school at the time of their enrollment. And 32.2% of youth indicated they attended school sporadically<sup>16</sup> or rarely<sup>17</sup>.</p> <p><i>As of 4/30/13</i> – 9.2% of BLOOM youth were not enrolled in school, and 25.4% reported attending school sporadically or rarely. A total of 11 BLOOM youth or 6.32% were enrolled in post-secondary education.</p> |
| <b>Tactic 2:</b> Supporting efforts that develop skills that lead to job readiness and/or create a pipeline of employment opportunities for   |   |
| <p><b><u>Short-term outcome:</u></b> Increased number of Black male youth developing job readiness skills.</p> <p><b><u>Indicator:</u></b> 70% of system-involved youth participants either: (1) completing a job skills training program; (2) obtaining an internship/apprenticeship, and/or (3) securing a paid part-or-full-time employment.</p> | <p><i>Upon enrollment into BLOOM</i> - 91.6% of youth reported they had never been employed, while a little more than 8% reported being employed prior to BLOOM.</p> <p><i>As of 4/30/13</i> – 87.9% of youth reported being unemployed, whereas 3.5% were employed, 1.2% were participating in an internship, 5.2% were engaged in a job training program, and 2.3% were going on job interviews.</p>  |
|   |   |

<sup>16</sup> Sporadic school attendance is defined as attending school 2-3 days per week.

<sup>17</sup> Rare school attendance is defined as attending school only 4-6 times per month.



With regard to progress made toward the BLOOM Initiative goals, the table above reveals the following successes with regard to the educational and employment status of BLOOM youth:

- **Education** - In the first year of the Initiative, there was a 3.4% decrease in the percent of youth “not enrolled” in school. As of April 30, 2013, 67.24% of BLOOM youth were enrolled in grades 9-12, and 12.64% enrolled in grades 7 and 8. The remaining youth either received a HS diploma, a GED, or were enrolled in post-secondary education (10.91%).
- **Employment** - In the first year of the Initiative, there was a 1.8% decrease in the percentage of youth who reported having never been employed. And an additional 2.3% of BLOOM youth were reported as attending job interviews.

Further, while BLOOM has revised their initial strategy areas, the three additional strategies not addressed – 1) policy advocacy, 2) strategic communications, and 3) strengthening organizational competences and skill sets – will continue as auxiliary activities. In addition, the evaluation of the BLOOM Initiative and it’s direct-service partners are now identified as a supplementary activity as well, aimed at supporting both the Initiative and direct-service organizations in achieving their goals for BLOOM youth participants.

## VII. Recommendations

In November 2012, the UCLA evaluation team submitted a mid-year assessment in which mid-course recommendations were provided. As a result, the BLOOM Initiative has implemented the following changes in the first year of the Initiative:

### *Mid-Year Recommendations Implemented by BLOOM*

1. **Strategy Refinement** – In an earlier evaluation report, it was highlighted that the BLOOM Initiative’s four key strategy areas of the BLOOM Initiative did not directly align with the goal of improved educational and employment opportunities for youth. Thus leaving the potential for grantees to meet the objectives of their agreements without youth making significant progress toward school completion or jobs. As such, the BLOOM Initiative revised their key strategies to a core strategy aimed at increasing educational and employment opportunities for BLOOM youth.
2. **Launch a Singularly Focused Advocacy Campaign in 2013** – In the mid-year report, the evaluation team highlighted the importance of linking direct practice efforts on the part of BLOOM partners to systems change. At that time, it was recommended that the selected strategy area be developed in a concerted effort with the community organizations funded in the key strategy area of policy advocacy. As a result and in partnership with the Community Coalition and Youth Justice Coalition, the BLOOM Initiative will launch a singularly focused advocacy campaign in July 2013.
3. **Re-Assess Goals for Number of Youth Served** – Further, in the mid-year report it was recommended that the BLOOM Initiative eliminate their goal, to decrease the number of Black male youth under Los Angeles County Probation supervision by 10 percent. Given that all of the Black male youth on probation in LA County are not served through the Initiative, it was recommended that the goal be adjusted to better align with the BLOOM

Initiative's design. In that report, we recommended that BLOOM identify a set number of youth to serve over the five-year period and track their involvement with the Probation Department. As a result, BLOOM has refined their goal and identified a specific number of Black male youth to achieve educational and employment goals by 2017, to which the BLOOM Initiative seeks to help 1,200 youth complete their high school education (diploma, GED, etc.) and 1,000 youth earn meaningful employment.

4. **Data Report** - In partnership with CCF/BLOOM, the evaluation team recommended and implemented a monthly data report, in which each of the direct-service partners are required to collect and track quantitative data that is consistent across each of the organization sites. Beginning in October 2012, the partner's submitted monthly tracking reports to the UCLA evaluation team. In February 2013, we transitioned from monthly reporting to quarterly reporting, with the final tracking report for the 2012-2013 funding year, due July 15, 2013.
5. **Assess Quality of Capacity Building Work** – Finally, in our initial assessment of each organization's capacity for data collection and evaluation, we identified that although Liberty Hill had outlined a strong plan to assist the direct-service partners in building capacity, there was a limitation as to how Liberty Hill would qualitatively assess their work. In October and November 2012, the UCLA evaluation team conducted qualitative interviews with each of the direct-service partners and Liberty Hill to address the strengths and challenges of building capacity within the partner organizations.

### ***Recommendations for Year 2:***

Based on year one data, the following recommendations are offered as ways to ensure greater consistency in the services being provided by community based organizations.

1. **Serve high-risk, high-need system involved youth** – As highlighted, during the focus groups with BLOOM youth, it became apparent that there was inconsistency in the definition of “system-involved” youth. For the second year, it is highly recommended that organizations selected for funding select high-risk, high need system-involved youth in their BLOOM programs.
2. **Consistency with data tracking** - In order to identify the manner in which BLOOMers are being served, it is essential that all partners create consistent and effective ways of tracking information. That is, while the partner organizations collect data through the monthly tracking reports, the organization's need to put mechanisms in place to capture the information throughout the youth's enrollment in the program. For example, upon entering programs, baseline information should be logged, and updated monthly to ensure reliable data. Further, the partners should provide an overview of their BLOOM programs. And finally, the partners need to adhere to submission deadlines for tracking reports.
3. **More concerted effort toward strategic messaging** - Greater alignment between the services being provided by the partners, and the larger message being disseminated about advocacy for BLOOMers. Thus, greater communication between LAGRANT and the partners would be critical in creating a more consistent message.

4. **More consistent link between probation department and partners** - Many of the partners faced challenges in identifying the appropriate number of Black males between the ages of 14-18 who were system involved. To ensure that this population is being serviced, better links between probation and the partners may be a way to ensure that all partners meet the target goal, and have identified system-involved youth.
5. **Regular monthly meetings by the partners.** While some of the partners direct service mission effectively served BLOOMers, others struggled to adequately serve young men. Consistent meetings amongst the partners, wherein best practices, data collection strategies, day-to-day challenges, and effective services being provided would be an approach to assist all partners in their direct servicing approaches.
6. **Capacity** - It is essential that all new partners have the necessary capacity to adequately service BLOOMers. Hence, new partners should have a proven track record of direct service for the BLOOM target population or similar group. Furthermore, all partners should have effective fundraising strategies, an ongoing and sustainable strategic plan.
7. **Direct service providers to provide an overview of their BLOOM program, goals, and processes** – Given the varying role each partner in helping to redirect the pathways of BLOOM participants, understanding the programmatic structure and goals of each partner organization will ensure all partners are aware of their respective assets and strengths, and to be able to identify points of synergy and resources to fill service gaps for participants.
8. **The current investment focus on Educational and Job opportunities is well underway and should be continued in order for more evidence to be collected over the next year.** At this point there is not sufficient evidence program impact on these outcomes because this program is barely a year old. The addition of partners in the 2013-2014 fiscal year should allow for a clearer picture to emerge by the summer of 2014.

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## Appendix A

### (INITIAL) BLOOM OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS MATRIX

#### Systems Change

##### 1. Policy Advocacy

- a. Short-term outcome (1 – 2 years): Increased public knowledge and will and creation of a policy agenda at the local level.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Fully developed collaborative base of NPOs focused on grassroots, community organizing efforts that target issues related to system-involved Black male youth.
- b. Long-term outcome (3 – 5 years): Decreased policies and systematic interventions that negatively alter the life paths of system-involved Black male youth.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of organizations with projects specifically focused on improving the pre-entry to re-entry experience of Black male youth involved in the County probation system.
  - ii. *Indicator #2*: Passage of 50% of all policy changes supported through grassroots organizing efforts.

##### 2. Strategic Messaging

- a. Short-term outcome (1 – 2 years): Increased awareness of challenges facing system-involved youth and recognition of their asset potential.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of events, publications and stories produced focused on positive images of system-involved youth.
- b. Long-term outcome (3 – 5 years): Increased positive portrayals of system-involved youth and projects that highlight their asset potential.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of local media stories profiling positive stories of system-involved youth.
  - ii. *Indicator #2*: Number of ads and other stories (e.g., billboards, pole-signage, commercials, etc.) produced that promote community action on behalf of system-involved male youth.
  - iii. *Indicator #3*: Number of new economic, educational and/or civic projects initiated with a specific focus on system-involved youth.

#### Building Healthy, Sustained Relationships Leading to Educational and Career Development

##### 1. Direct Services

- a. Short-term outcome #1 (1 – 2 years): Decreased time of Black male youth involvement in the juvenile justice system.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of system-involved youth participants either: (1) avoiding long-term incarceration after initial system contact (i.e., six months or more); and/or (2) avoiding second incarceration term.
- b. Short-term outcome #2 (3 – 5 years): Increased connections between system-involved youth and Black men that lead to increased awareness of possible career paths.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of system-involved youth participants matched with working Black men.
  - ii. *Indicator #2*: Number of system-involved youth participants actively involved in volunteer, service learning or other charitable activities.
- c. Long-term outcome #1 (1 – 2 years): Decreased Black male youth recidivism rates.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Lower juvenile recidivism rate among Black male youth participants.
  - ii. *Indicator #2*: Percentage decrease of Black male youth represented in the County probation system.
- d. Long-term outcome #2 (3 – 5 years): Sustained relationships between system-involved youth and Black men that result in youth's pursuit of vocational and/or educational paths.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: Number of system-involved youth identifying at least one adult male role model in their lives.

- ii. *Indicator #2*: Number of system-involved youth pursuing job training or academic advancement.

### **Strengthening Organizational Competencies and Skills Sets**

#### *1. Capacity Building*

- a. Short-term outcome (1 – 2 years): Organizations have developed or completed processes that increase their potential for growth and chances of sustainability.
  - i. *Indicator #1*: 90% of organizations will have completed a strategic plan.
  - ii. *Indicator #2*: 90% of organizations will have completed a fund development plan.
  - iii. *Indicator #3*: 90% of organizations will have completed a board development plan.
- b. Long-term outcome (3 – 5 years): Organizations have implemented processes that result in overall growth and long-term sustainability.
- c. *Indicator #1*: 75% of organizations have implemented a strategic, fund and/or board development plan.
- d. *Indicator #2*: 75% of organizations will still be operational and have specific programs/services geared toward system-involved Black male youth.

## Appendix B

### Data Report Variable List

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#### SECTION 1: Demographic Information

1. **Youth ID - Please create a unique identifier for each youth served through the BLOOM Initiative using the initials of the name of the partner organization along with the date of birth for the youth.**
    - a. **For Example:**
      - i. **Partner Organization: California Community Foundation (CCF)**
      - ii. **Youth Date of Birth: 05/25/1997**
      - iii. **Youth ID: CCF052597**
  
  2. **Date of Birth**
  
  3. **BLOOM Enrollment Date**
  
  4. **Referral Source**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. **Law Enforcement/Probation Dept/Officer**
      - ii. **Judicial/Court System**
      - iii. **School Counselor/ Teacher/Admin**
      - iv. **Parent/Guardian**
      - v. **Community/Faith Based Organization**
      - vi. **Community Member**
      - vii. **BLOOM Alliance Partner**
      - viii. **Friend**
      - ix. **Self**
  
  5. **Place of Residence – Please input the zip code of each BLOOM youth’s residential location.**
-

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SECTION 2: Baseline / Status Prior to BLOOM

1. **School Status – What is the most recent grade completed by your BLOOM youth upon entering your program?**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - ii. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - iii. 9<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - iv. 10<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - v. 11<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - vi. 12<sup>th</sup> Grade
      - vii. Not Enrolled
      - viii. Diploma Received
      - ix. GED Received
      - x. Enrolled in Post-Secondary Program
  
  2. **School Credits – Enter the number of middle school and/or high school credits received by your BLOOM youth upon entering your program?**
  
  3. **School Attendance – Prior to enrolling in your program, how often was your BLOOM youth attending school?**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Not Enrolled
      - ii. Never Attended
      - iii. Rarely (4-6 times/month)
      - iv. Sporadically (2-3 days/week)
      - v. Regularly (5 days/week)
  
  4. **Suspended/Expelled from school prior to BLOOM?**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Suspended
      - ii. Expelled
      - iii. No
  
  5. **Ever employed prior to BLOOM enrollment?**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Yes
      - ii. No
      - iii. Internship
  
  6. **Currently on probation?**
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Yes
-



ii. No

**7. Type of Probation/Supervision**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **Formal Supervision**
  - ii. **Informal Supervision**
  - iii. **Not on Probation**

**8. Ever been ordered to probation camp, juvenile detention, training school or other type of juvenile correctional facility?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **Yes**
  - ii. **No**

**9. DCFS Supervision?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **Yes**
  - ii. **No**
- 

**SECTION 3: Current BLOOM Status**

**1. If BLOOM youth was referred by a BLOOM Alliance Partner, please indicate which organization referred your BLOOMER?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **Brotherhood Crusade**
  - ii. **Community Coalition**
  - iii. **Los Angeles Urban League**
  - iv. **Youth Mentoring Connection**
  - v. **Youth Justice Coalition**

**2. School Status – What is the current school status of your BLOOM youth?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - ii. **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - iii. **9<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - iv. **10<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - v. **11<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - vi. **12<sup>th</sup> Grade**
  - vii. **Not Enrolled**
  - viii. **Diploma Received**
  - ix. **GED Received**
  - x. **Enrolled in Post-Secondary**

**3. School Attending – If applicable, please type in the name of the school your BLOOM youth is attending (e.g., View Park High School)**

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- 
4. Number of credits earned for high school completion.
  5. Number of college credits completed.
  6. School Attendance – How often is your BLOOM youth attending school?
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Not Enrolled
      - ii. Never Attends
      - iii. Rarely (4-6 times/month)
      - iv. Sporadically (2-3 days/week)
      - v. Regularly (5 days/week)
  7. Suspended/Expelled from School?
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Suspended
      - ii. Expelled
      - iii. No
  8. Job Status (e.g. employed, training program, job interviews, etc.)
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Employed
      - ii. Training Program
      - iii. Internship
      - iv. Job Interviews
      - v. Unemployed
  9. Employer/Program Name – If applicable, please type in the name of your BLOOM youth’s employer and/or the name of employment/training they are participating in.
  10. Job Start Date (e.g., 7/10/2012)
  11. Work more than 20 hours/week?
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Yes
      - ii. No
  12. Living Arrangement/Residence?
    - a. Dropdown Menu Options:
      - i. Single Birth Mother
      - ii. Single Birth Father
      - iii. Both Birth Parents
      - iv. Grandparent(s)
-

- 
- v. **Extended Family**
  - vi. **Foster Family**
  - vii. **Group Care Facility**
  - viii. **Homeless**

**13. Currently on probation?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. **Yes**
  - ii. **No**

**14. Type of probation supervision?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. **Formal Supervision**
  - ii. **Informal Supervision**
  - iii. **Not on Probation**

**15. Violated?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. **Yes**
  - ii. **No**

**16. Type of offense committed?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. **Status Offense**
  - ii. **Criminal Offense**
  - iii. **No Offense Committed**

**17. Is this a new Offense:**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No

**18. Ordered to probation camp, juvenile detention, training school or other type of juvenile correctional facility?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
  - i. **Yes**
  - ii. **No**

**19. DCFS Supervision?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
    - i. **Yes**
    - ii. **No**
-

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**20. BLOOM Status?**

- a. Dropdown Menu Options:
- i. **Active**
  - ii. **Non-Active**

## APPENDIX C

### Qualitative Protocol – Capacity Building

#### BLOOM Initiative Partners

1. We'd like to start out talking about your plan for serving youth enrolled in the BLOOM initiative. Describe what happens to youth when they are referred or come to your program?
  - a. What is the structure and sequence of program services?
  - b. How are youth recruited and/or identified for targeted services?
  - c. Are there any early challenges that are emerging?
  - d. Are there any early strengths that are emerging?
2. What capacity building resources or technical assistance that has been the most helpful for your agency/group in the first year of work with the BLOOM Initiative?
  - a. Is there any capacity building or technical assistance you've received that has been particularly helpful?
  - b. Is there a need that has developed for which you have not found useful assistance or helpful resources?
  - c. Was there an unexpected capacity building resource or assistance that you have found?
3. What have been your biggest challenges as a partner in the BLOOM Initiative?
4. What kind of capacity building assistance has Liberty Hill offered? What kind of technical assistance has Liberty Hill offered?
  - a. Describe your working relationship with Liberty Hill?
  - b. How have they provided help for your agency in particular?
5. What kind of capacity building assistance would you like Liberty Hill to provide in the future?
  - a. Is there other technical assistant that you would like?
6. Anything else you want to discuss?

## APPENDIX D

### Qualitative Protocol – Liberty Hill Capacity Building

1. What has it been like working with the BLOOM Initiative Partners? Describe your overall sense of the project this far.
2. Describe the process of providing assistance to individual partners.
  - a. How do you reach out?
  - b. How have different partners reached out to you?
  - c. What are the most common requests?
3. What have been some of the biggest challenges you have faced during this first year of the BLOOM Initiative?
4. What has worked out well in working with the BLOOM partners so far?
5. How have you worked with the BLOOM funder/leadership team? Describe your communication and planning patterns.
6. Describe what you see as the road ahead.
7. Anything else you want to share?

## APPENDIX E

### BLOOM Partner Qualitative Interviews (Capacity Building)

| BLOOM Partner Organization                          | Interview Date   | Evaluation Team Staff Members                    |
|---|------------------|--|
| <b><i>Community Organizing</i></b>                  |                  |  |
| Community Coalition                                 | October 29, 2012 | Charles Lea, Samarah Blackmon                    |
| Youth Justice Coalition                             | November 1, 2012 | Charles Lea, Samarah Blackmon                    |
| <b><i>Career-Based Mentoring</i></b>                |                  |  |
| Brotherhood Crusade                                 | October 30, 2012 | Dr. Jorja Leap, Samarah Blackmon                 |
| Los Angeles Urban League                            | November 1, 2012 | Charles Lea, Samarah Blackmon                    |
| Youth Mentoring Connection                          | October 26, 2012 | Dr. Tyrone Howard, Charles Lea, Samarah Blackmon |
| <b><i>Strengthening Organizational Capacity</i></b> |                  |  |
| Liberty Hill Foundation                             | October 30, 2012 | Samarah Blackmon                                 |

**APPENDIX F**  
**STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**  
**QUESTION AREAS**

1. Have you heard of the BLOOM Initiative? If so, what do you know about it?
2. What do you think of the BLOOM goal? Is it realistic?
3. How can your organization collaborate/work with the BLOOM Initiative?
  - a. What are the main organizations having a positive impact on system involved youth completing high school?
  - b. What are the main public or private sector organizations you think are most open to extending opportunities to young adults who have had a brush with the law?
  - c. *For funders:* How might philanthropy invest in providing lessons for public and private sectors to apply in supporting system-involved Black, male youth.
4. What do you think probation system involved youth most need to ensure they stay on a healthy path to young adulthood? (Please share your thoughts about how to best serve systeminvolved youth).
  - a. Where are we with supports for Black male youth who are probation involved? Probe: Are things improving? Stagnant? Deteriorating?
  - b. What external factors, events or trends currently impacting this population in L.A. County? How do you think these will affect the BLOOM initiative and other groups engaged in working with these youth?
5. What are the most important outcomes BLOOM can achieve over the next four years?
6. Anything else you want to share?



## APPENDIX G

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW RESPONSES

**Q1: Have you heard of the BLOOM Initiative? If so, what do you think about it?**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Respondent #1 | I am familiar with BLOOM from personal and professional connections. This familiarity comes from two perspectives, first serving kids in probation at Camp Gonzales, knowing Carol Biondi and Jorja Leap, and through my wife who is one of the key people at [a BLOOM partner]. I know George Weaver, and have heard Robert speak. Very interested in being supportive of the Initiative. This is a great initiative – there’s a real need of serving this population. I know there’s an interest in helping African-American men, and believe it’s important, but would also include Latino (boys and men of color). BLOOM is important because there’s not a lot of effort from foundations to help this particular population, not a lot of resources out there that will let you go after this particular population |
| Respondent #2 | I have not heard of BLOOM.  |
| Respondent #3 | Respondent #3 Sure have! I was going to apply for the grant. I work closely with several organizations that were funded this year.  |
| Respondent #4 | We [his agency] met with Robert [Lewis] a few months ago and it was great. We got together in the process of our efforts to realign the youth “Work Source” system and we wanted to increase the ability to hit the populations hardest to serve – particularly out of school youth – and within that population African American youth and that started a conversation with Robert. These are the youth we must focus on because their numbers are so large – and not in proportion to their percentage of the population.   |
| Respondent #5 | I think I know what the Initiative is – for more than a year maybe for many years there’s been a lot of dialogue and discussion that we’ve got a crisis on our hands with our young African-American boys. The crisis is that there are incredibly high percentages of these boys in the cracks, dropping out of school – the California Community Foundation has been looking at this. The CCF is about to launch a series of grants. But that’s about all I know.   |
| Respondent #6 | I’ve been long aware of the BLOOM Initiative and the work going on at the California Community Foundation because we are all focusing on the same groups. There is a lot of partner crossover and because of this, we are all well aware of what BLOOM is – we share same emphasis, same interests. It’s also important that we undertake this work with a long-term emphasis on youth because we know there are not going to be any overnight quick fixes. I’ve been looking at issues of health, youth advocacy and leadership and linking it to policy development and systems change. You’ve [Jorja] seen that happen in your other research with us where we have focused on bringing different young men of color – both black and brown – together and teaching them   |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
|               | leadership skills. Of course, folk like George Weaver and Brotherhood Crusade are part of this so there is synergy between our different initiatives.  |
| Respondent #7 | I have not heard of it – although it’s hard for us here in the field to learn about everything that is going on. We here in the community really need to hear about these Initiatives – they are part of the work we are doing and it’s important. I would have liked to know more about this because I work with probation youth every day. |
| Respondent #8 | I have not heard of it.  |

**Q2: What do you think of the BLOOM goal? Is it realistic?**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Respondent #1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Depends on how you slice it.” Does it mean no involvement in the system? Does it mean completing probation? Does it mean after 6 months, 1-year, 2-year out? (Comment – this individual discussed the need to better define “system-involved youth”).</li> <li>• The goal is realistic, however benchmarks need to be put in place.</li> <li>• Need to better define how success will be measured and what benchmarks are put in place to assess success along the way.</li> <li>• Need to identify specific outcomes – everyday many of us has to negotiate the system, how can we support him to make better decisions?</li> <li>• With the goal – 10% away from the system? 10% reduction in probation? Those in detention facility? There needs to be more clarity.</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It depends.”</li> <li>• Need to clearly define what is meant by youth “involved in the system,” to understand exactly what a 10% reduction in system-involved youth would mean</li> <li>• Strongly believe it is possible to reduce the number of system-involved youth, BUT it will take longer than 5 years to make that kind of social change.</li> <li>• Need to consider the factors that affect this population – family, gangs, etc., and additional challenges.</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If ever there’s been a time that could work, it’s now.</li> </ul>   |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be more agencies, more people paying attention to it.</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is realistic if we all work together on this.</li> <li>• BLOOM can guide the youth it serves but there is a much greater need out there.</li> <li>• It is a realistic goal.</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't really know.</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the focus on system involved youth/impacted youth we can do this.</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's realistic if we all work together – we work in different silos.</li> <li>• Need for more information</li> <li>• The problem took many years to develop, it will take many years to solve</li> <li>• It's not only a realistic goal – it's truly a matter of “life and death”</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's realistic if there is funding and support for many years</li> <li>• There needs to be attention to research and evaluation</li> <li>• It's important to make sure that the families of these youth are involved – that will make it a realistic goal</li> </ul>                         |

**Q3: How can your organization collaborate/work with the BLOOM Initiative?**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Respondent #1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to be a good supporter of BLOOM to achieve goals.</li> <li>• Already involved indirectly by working with young men at Camp Gonzales.</li> <li>• The goals of [agency name] are aligned with BLOOM</li> <li>• Need for more collaboration</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to work with BLOOM Initiative, but didn't provide any tangible ways when we spoke.</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently we have a number of partners (SCLA Homeless Transition, CEASE FIRE (20-30 organizations), WATTS Gang Task force, Project Fatherhood, Probation, LACOE, state, etc.) – through all of these groups able to link youth to a number of services needed.</li> <li>• Housing (emergency, transition, permanent), job prep, training, mental heal</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a government agency we do not collaborate directly with the BLOOM</li> </ul>  |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
|               | <p>Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with an intermediate agency between us and BLOOM: the Brotherhood Crusade. Long term collaboration with Brotherhood Crusade many years – this is strongest collaboration</li> <li>• Need for co-enrollments between BLOOM programs and ours in our youth “Work Source” system so we’ve learned how to work together effectively.</li> </ul> <p>We’ve built on the past collaboration and we’ve carried the work with BLOOM forward. It’s important that there are many organizations working with these youth – the system involved youth – there’s us, BLOOM, Brotherhood Crusade, L.A. Conservation Corps, “we’ve got to keep things going.”</p> |
| Respondent #5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In at least a few different ways – especially funding</li> <li>• We do work with all of those organizations and want to continue to do so.</li> <li>• So many in the community are doing the work – we need some way to coordinate together</li> <li>• There has not been good collaboration in any ongoing way</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our groups are starting to come together</li> <li>• We need help in building and working as a coalition.</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have real connection to both youth and the probation department – we could be used to find the right youth for BLOOM to provide services.</li> <li>• There is no such thing as collaboration right now – it really needs to develop</li> <li>• There must be a real leader for this collaboration</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I’d like to partner with them as we work with youth in the South L.A. schools – these youth are system-involved and need resources.</li> <li>• Not even sure what this collaboration would look like</li> </ul>   |

**Q4: What do you think probation system involved youth most need to ensure they stay on a healthy path to young adulthood? (Please share your thoughts about how to best serve system-involved youth).**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Respondent #1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family involvement/support</li> <li>• Recognize youth bring a variety of strengths – some academic, some not as inclined. Need larger policy support to minimize employment barriers. For example, to get a barber license you cannot have felonies.</li> <li>• Bigger than just “Banning the Box,” maybe putting timeframe on employment restrictions.</li> <li>• “Chasing kids in field all the time” (just part of the work)</li> <li>• Keep in mind success is relative – Sometimes foundations don’t want to fund if the youth “fail,” but sometimes success will take a while. Need to define “success” with this population, understand the reality that it may take a while.</li> <li>• Essential for young men to have access/exposure to different organizations when they leave [camps, jails, etc.]</li> <li>• Network of CBO’s at camp everyday, an organization anchored at each probation site to initiative relationships while in detention</li> <li>• Outreach at camp/partnerships with probation</li> <li>• Important for youth to be aware of services available to them when they return to the community</li> <li>• Mentoring is critical</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant guidance, direct service, comprehensive, wrap-around services</li> <li>• Individual plan and mentor to move down the road (Pathway Coach/Case Manager)</li> <li>• More intensive services, recreational activities, sense of community, more socially involvement in community</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job preparation</li> <li>• Mental health and Substance Abuse Treatment</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> </ul>  |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean, safe place to live with a supportive environment</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education is the critical factor.</li> <li>• City departments working together more than there has ever been before</li> <li>• LAUSD needs to be integrated into the effort</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desperate need for mentoring for system-involved youth</li> <li>• Jobs, jobs, jobs – did I say jobs? I love what Father Greg Boyle said, “Nothing stops a bullet like a job.”</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #6 | N/A   |
| Respondent #7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more development of trades, certification programs, short-term training/educational options.</li> <li>• Some of these young men want to pursue high school and college, but some just want to start working right away, and that option should be made more available.</li> <li>• Mentoring – sort of like a “big brother”</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need education, “more than anything</li> <li>• Mentors and navigators to help them with the system</li> </ul>  |

**Q5: What are the most important outcomes BLOOM can achieve over the next four years?**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Respondent #1 | N/A  |
| Respondent #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently finding solutions to the affect, not the cause – need to find a solutions that address the cause</li> <li>• Keep the youth from getting into trouble</li> <li>• Change outlook on future, then the other outcomes will come naturally</li> <li>• How to keep youth in school</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue emphasis on this population</li> <li>• More work on understanding where all of these youth are at – where are they living? Attending school? And so forth.</li> <li>• More funding to expand geography of youth served</li> </ul>  |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCF did a good job this time around bringing attention to what’s going on with this population</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping the kids out of the juvenile justice and adult system</li> <li>• Getting the kids enrolled back in the right educational system</li> <li>• Getting kids connected to jobs</li> </ul>  |
| Respondent #5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huge need for cross-organizational, cross government collaboration</li> <li>• Help agencies fighting for their survival</li> <li>• Merge non-profit and government efforts</li> <li>• Collaboration will ensure the safety of kids who have to cross neighborhoods</li> </ul> |
| Respondent #6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to end the cradle to prison pipeline – not just narrow it</li> <li>• More public-private partnerships</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping kids out of the system</li> <li>• Making sure these kids are back in school</li> <li>• Need to educate the public about who these kids are</li> </ul>   |
| Respondent #8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to keep these youngsters in school – even more than jobs, they need education</li> </ul>  |

**Q6: Anything else you want to share?**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Respondent #2 | Traditional concepts don’t apply, many youth who have been involved in the system, don’t believe they will live past 25 years old. This is intensive work.   |
| Respondent #3 | This is difficult work; the Black male has been traumatized. We need PTSD for kids in these communities where there is violence. These youth are in a devastating situation, we have to take advantage of the ones who are able to come home. It would be much better to reach out to youth while there at the jails/camps. You also need to think about the fact that grassroots agencies are being “squeezed out” by the larger organizations. This doesn’t give us the opportunity to build capacity. |
| Respondent #7 | You need to include everyone in this effort – don’t ignore the community-based organizations. Oftentimes probation comes to us for information and help.   |

## APPENDIX H

### Tables and Charts: BLOOM Participant Data

*Status Changes Among BLOOM Participants: October 30, 2012 Through April 23, 2013*

| EDUCATION                    |            |             |                |             |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| School Status                | Baseline   |             | Current Status |             |
|                              | N          | %           | N              | %           |
| 7th Grade                    | 12         | 6.9%        | 7              | 4.0%        |
| 8th Grade                    | 15         | 8.6%        | 15             | 8.6%        |
| 9th Grade                    | 26         | 14.9%       | 15             | 8.6%        |
| 10th Grade                   | 36         | 20.7%       | 34             | 19.5%       |
| 11th Grade                   | 45         | 25.9%       | 34             | 19.5%       |
| 12th Grade                   | 25         | 14.4%       | 34             | 19.5%       |
| Diploma Received             | 6          | 3.5%        | 7              | 4.0%        |
| Enrolled in Post-Secondary   | 2          | 1.2%        | 11             | 6.3%        |
| GED Received                 | 7          | 4.0%        | 1              | 0.6%        |
| Not Enrolled in School       | N/A        | N/A         | 16             | 9.2%        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>174</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| School Attendance            |            |             |                |             |
| Sporadically (2-3 Days/Week) | 46         | 26.4%       | 32             | 18.5%       |
| Rarely (4-6 Times/Month)     | 10         | 5.8%        | 13             | 6.9%        |
| Regularly (5 Days/Week)      | 96         | 55.2%       | 94             | 54.3%       |
| Not Enrolled                 | 22         | 12.6%       | 35             | 20.2%       |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>174</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| Suspended/Expelled?          |            |             |                |             |
| Expelled                     | 41         | 23.6%       | 5              | 2.9%        |
| Suspended                    | 82         | 47.1%       | 4              | 2.3%        |
| No                           | 51         | 29.3%       | 165            | 94.8%       |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>174</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>     | <b>100%</b> |



| <b>EDUCATION</b>      |   |          |             |           |
|-----------------------|---|----------|-------------|-----------|
|                       |   | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
| <b>Baseline</b>       | <b>Number of Completed Middle and/or High School Credits Prior to BLOOM</b> | 134      | 97.73       | 66.83     |
| <b>Current Status</b> | <b>High School Credits Earned</b>   | 158      | 123.01      | 189.48    |
|                       | <b>College Credits Earned</b>   | 90       | 0.94        | 5.94      |

| <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>     |   |             |             |
|-----------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Baseline</b>       | <b>Ever Employed Prior to BLOOM Enrollment?</b> | <b>N</b>    | <b>%</b>    |
|                       | No  | 160         | 92.0%       |
|                       | Yes   | 14          | 8.1%        |
|                       | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>174</b>  | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Current Status</b> | <b>Job Status</b>                               |             |             |
|                       | Employed  | 6           | 3.5         |
|                       | Internship                                      | 2           | 1.2         |
|                       | Job Interviews                                  | 4           | 2.3         |
|                       | Training Program                                | 9           | 5.2         |
|                       | Unemployed                                      | 152         | 87.9        |
|                       | <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>173</b>  | <b>100%</b> |
|                       | <b>Work More Than 20 Hours/Week?</b>            |             |             |
|                       | No  | 17          | 68.0%       |
|                       | Yes   | 8           | 32.0%       |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>25</b>                                       | <b>100%</b> |             |

| <b>SYSTEM INVOLVMENT</b>   |                 |             |                       |             |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
|  | <b>Baseline</b> |             | <b>Current Status</b> |             |
| <b>Currently on probation?</b>   | <b>N</b>        | <b>%</b>    | <b>N</b>              | <b>%</b>    |
| No   | 62              | 35.6%       | 62                    | 35.6%       |
| Yes  | 112             | 64.4%       | 112                   | 64.4%       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>174</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Type of Probation Supervision</b>   |                 |             |                       |             |
| Formal Supervision   | 114             | 65.5%       | 106                   | 60.9%       |
| Informal Supervision   | 30              | 17.2%       | 24                    | 13.8%       |
| Not on Probation   | 30              | 17.2%       | 44                    | 25.3%       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>174</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Ever been ordered to probation camp, juvenile detention, training school or other type of juvenile correctional facility?</b> |                 |             |                       |             |
| No   | 70              | 39.9%       | 146                   | 83.9%       |
| Yes  | 104             | 60.1%       | 28                    | 16.1%       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>174</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Type of Offense Committed?</b>  |                 |             |                       |             |
| Criminal Offense   | N/A             | N/A         | 6                     | 3.5%        |
| Status Offense   | N/A             | N/A         | 14                    | 8.1%        |
| No Offense Committed   | N/A             | N/A         | 154                   | 88.5%       |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 |             | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Violated?</b>   |                 |             |                       |             |
| No   | N/A             | N/A         | 162                   | 93.1%       |
| Yes  | N/A             | N/A         | 12                    | 6.9%        |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 |             | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>New Offense?</b>  |                 |             |                       |             |
| No   | N/A             | N/A         | 44                    | 91.7%       |
| Yes  | N/A             | N/A         | 4                     | 8.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>   |                 |             | <b>48</b>             | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Department of Children &amp; Family Services (DCFS) Supervision?</b>  |                 |             |                       |             |
| No   | 159             | 91.3%       | 166                   | 95.4%       |
| Yes  | 15              | 8.7%        | 8                     | 4.6%        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>174</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>174</b>            | <b>100%</b> |

## APPENDIX I

### BLOOM: Building a Lifetime of Options and Opportunities for Men

#### Investing in L.A.'s Black Male Youth

#### Grantmaking Strategy, Outcomes and Indicators Overview

##### **Issue Area:** Delinquency System-Involved Youth

**Change Statement:** The lives of Black male youth involved with the county probation system can be redirected toward a path that produces improved education and employment opportunities if they are afforded meaningful opportunities and given sustained support to complete their secondary education, pursue post-secondary educational advancement and gain the skills to become job ready.

**Goal:** To redirect Black male youth (ages 14 – 18 years old) who or have been involved with the L.A. County probation system toward a path that produces improved education and employment opportunities.

**Target:** 1,200 youth to complete high school and 1,000 youth (18 and older) will earn employment with taxable income, by the year 2017

##### **Core Strategy:**

###### *Educational and Job Opportunity:*

- Academic/Vocational Advancement - Supporting efforts that facilitate academic advancement for youth resulting in high school completion and/or pursuit of post-secondary education.
- Creation of a Jobs Pipeline – Supporting efforts that develop skills that lead to job readiness and/or create a pipeline of employment opportunities for qualified youth.

##### **Outcomes and Indicators:**

Tactic #1 - Supporting efforts that facilitate academic advancement for youth resulting in high school completion and/or pursuit of post-

secondary education.

- Short-term outcome #2 (1 – 2 years): Increased number of Black male youth enrolled in school full-time.
  - *Indicator #1:* 80% of system-involved youth participants enrolled in high school or post-secondary learning.
- Long-term outcome #2 (3 – 5 years): Increased number of Black male youth completing secondary and post-secondary education.
  - *Indicator #1:* 60% of system-involved youth participants will have received high school diploma, GED and/or vocational certificate.

Tactic #2 - Supporting efforts that develop skills that lead to job readiness and/or create a pipeline of employment opportunities for qualified youth.

- Short-term outcome #3 (1 – 2 years): Increased number of Black male youth developing job readiness skills.
  - *Indicator #1*: 70% of system-involved youth participants either: (1) completing a job skills training program; (2) obtaining an internship/apprenticeship; and/or (3) securing paid part or full time employment.
- Long-term outcome #3 (3 – 5 years): Increased number of Black male youth are employed.
  - *Indicator #1*: 50% of system-involved youth participants 18 years and older will have employment earning taxable income.

**Auxiliary Activities:**

1. *Systems Change:*

- Supporting community-based efforts that engage youth to identify and mitigate policies and systematic interventions that negatively alter the educational and employment trajectory of system-involved Black male youth and promote policy and legislative change.

2. *Strategic Communications:*

- Supporting efforts that seek to re-frame images of system-involved youth through challenging public perception and media messaging, emphasizing positive alternatives and appealing for broader support to provide opportunities for educational and/or vocational advancement.

3. *Strengthening Organizational Competencies and Skills Sets:*

- Supporting organizations to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and prospects for long-term sustainability.

4. *Evaluation:*

- Supporting efforts that measure proposed outcomes and potential large-scale impact and assesses replication of effective approaches for supporting system-involved youth.