
TIMELINE OF PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT FOR BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT

1992-2020



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Timeline of Philanthropic Support for Black Men and Boys

1992 to 2020

Current philanthropic efforts to support Black male achievement follows the foundational work of past initiatives and tireless champions. This timeline highlights influential activities, publications, and initiatives focused on improving life outcomes for Black men and boys, from 1992 to 2020.



Philanthropic /
Nonprofit Activity



Historical Context



Published Report /
Article / Video / Film

1992



The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) launches the African American Men and Boys Initiative, led by Dr. Bobby Austin, to repair the breach between Black males and the rest of society.



Police officers are acquitted in the beating of Rodney King, sparking civil unrest in Los Angeles.



Director Spike Lee's film *Malcolm X* is released.

1993



Arthur Ashe, legendary tennis player, is posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton.



The [Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males](#) is formed to improve the quality of life for Black males and address the challenges they face.



Advocate Oscar Wright files a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights against Oakland Unified School District for denying Black students the same access to college preparatory and advanced curricula as other students. The department orders the school district to provide equal access to educational resources.



Dr. Cornel West publishes the book [Race Matters](#).

1994



The [Ford Foundation](#), [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), and [Charles Stewart Mott Foundation](#) develop fatherhood initiatives, which include a focus on African-American families.



Dr. Cornel West joins the faculty of Harvard University and the "dream team" of scholars in the university's African-American Studies Department.

1995



The [Urban Institute](#), funded by the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), releases a [report](#) profiling 51 effective and promising programs serving African-American male youth.



The Million Man March is held at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to "convey to the world a vastly different picture of the Black male."

1996



The National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys, established by the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), releases [Repairing the Breach: Key Ways to Support Family Life, Reclaim Our Streets, and Rebuild Civil Society in America's Communities](#). Washington Post columnist, Bill Raspberry, calls it “the plan to save America.”



[The MacArthur Foundation](#) awards its “genius” grant to Bill Strickland, President and CEO of [Manchester Bidwell Corporation](#) and its subsidiaries, which offer successful job training and after-school programs.

1997



The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) launches the Village Foundation, the first foundation focused solely on the needs of Black boys and men.



Led by Geoffrey Canada, the [Harlem Children's Zone](#) Project begins, with a network of programs for a 24-block area of Harlem. The program is now a national model for education and breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

1998



The Village Foundation adopts and begins funding the National African-American Male Collaboration, a network of 32 grassroots, direct service providers offering a wide array of services to Black men and boys.



James Byrd, Jr. is brutally murdered by white supremacists in Jasper, Texas, in a manner reminiscent of earlier lynchings. In response, Byrd's family creates the [James Byrd Foundation for Racial Healing](#).



Congress passes the [Workforce Investment Act](#), creating a universal system of one-stop career centers that provide training and employment services.

1999



Franklin Raines becomes the CEO of Fannie Mae and is only the second Black CEO of a Fortune 500 company.



Maurice Ashley becomes the first African-American Grandmaster of Chess and forms the Harlem Chess Center.



African-American farmers win a class action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for racial discrimination in its allocation of farm loans and assistance.

2000



South Carolina is the last state in the U.S. to make Martin Luther King, Jr. Day a paid holiday for all state employees.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Village Foundation form a joint venture to save African-American family farms.

2001



General Colin Powell becomes the first African American to serve as U.S. Secretary of State.



Congress passes the [No Child Left Behind Act](#), supporting standards-based education reform.

- 2002**  The [University System of Georgia](#) launches the [African-American Male Initiative](#) to recruit, retain, and graduate Black male college students.
-  The Dellums Commission, funded by the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) and chaired by Ron Dellums, is formed to research conditions faced by young men of color and to produce policy recommendations for reducing disparities.
- 2003**  The [Schott Foundation for Public Education](#) begins its Black Boys Initiative, to improve the educational experiences of Black boys and to ensure that they graduate from high school with the confidence to become successful members of society.
-  The U.S. Supreme Court issues a ruling on affirmative action in higher education, upholding the use of race in admissions policies.
- 2004**  The [Kapor Center for Social Impact](#) begins groundwork for what is now the [College Bound Brotherhood](#).
-  The [Schott Foundation for Public Education](#) publishes its first 50-state report card on high school graduation rates of Black male students.
- 2005**  Chicago's [Third World Press](#), one of the oldest African-American publishing houses in the U.S., establishes the [Black Male Development Symposium](#) (BMDS) to promote community discussions on the status of African-American males.
-  Hurricane Katrina hits the Gulf Coast. African Americans make up a disproportionate share of the storm's victims.
- 2006**  The Twenty-First Century Foundation develops the 2025 Network for Black Men and Boys, a national network of advocates for Black men and boys.
-  The *New York Times* publishes the front page story, "[Plight Deepens for Black Men, Studies Warn](#)," based on Ronald Mincy's book, *Black Males Left Behind*. The [Association of Black Foundation Executives](#) convenes members to discuss philanthropy's response to the crisis.
-  Pipeline Crisis/Winning Strategies is created. The initiative is a diverse collaborative to mobilize private sector leadership, investments, and advocacy in support of social and economic equality for young Black men.
-  The police shooting of Sean Bell in New York City grabs national headlines.
-  The [Tom Joyner Foundation](#) begins the [Hercules Scholarship](#), providing financial assistance to successful male students attending historically Black colleges and universities.
- 2007**  The [Heinz Endowments](#) begins its [African American Men and Boys Initiative](#).



The [Ford Foundation](#) publishes [Why We Can't Wait](#), which indicates that 75 percent of the effective and promising organizations profiled by the Urban Institute in 1995 no longer serve Black males. The [Association of Black Foundation Executives](#), [Casey Family Programs](#), [Ford Foundation](#), and [Open Society Foundations](#) host the National Funders' Dialogue on Black Males in Seattle, WA to discuss how to generate more explicit grantmaking strategies for Black males.



Thousands of protesters attend a civil rights march in Jena, LA and hold rallies around the country in support of the [Jena Six](#).

2008



The [Skillman Foundation](#) makes a policy decision to embed support for Black and brown boys in its grantmaking strategy.



The [Open Society Foundations](#) launches an initiative focused on improving the life outcomes of Black men and boys, originally called the Leadership and Sustainability Institute, later to be known as the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.



The [Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](#) publishes a [mapping report](#), funded by the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), designed to expand scholarship on Black males.



Barack Obama is elected President.



The [Ford Foundation](#) publishes [Momentum: Sustaining Efforts to Improve Life Outcomes Among African-American Males](#), surveying the landscape of philanthropic efforts supporting Black males and outlining a plan of action.

2009



Eric Holder becomes the first African American to serve as U.S. Attorney General.



The Black Male Donor Collaborative is launched, identifying programs and policies that reduce achievement disparities impacting young Black males in New York City.



Barack Obama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

2010



Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families launches Healthy Men, Healthy Communities to improve life outcomes of men and boys of color.



[Frontline Solutions](#) and the Twenty-First Century Foundation publish [The State of Black Male Commissions: A Survey](#), documenting the work of Black male commissions nationally.



The [California Endowment](#) begins its 10-year [Building Healthy Communities](#) campaign, which includes a Boys of Color component.



Oakland Unified School District (CA) dedicates itself to closing the achievement gap for African-American male students, launching the [African American Male Achievement](#) initiative, in partnership with the [East Bay Community Foundation](#).



The University of California Press and the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Race, Ethnicity and Diversity publish *Changing Places: How Communities Will Improve the Health of Boys of Color*, with funding from The [California Endowment](#).



The [American Values Institute](#), [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), and [Open Society Foundations](#) host the [Black Male Re-Imagined](#) conference to encourage the media industry to help transform how Black males are portrayed in popular culture and public discourse.

2011



The [Open Society Foundations](#) and [Echoing Green](#) announce the Open Society [Black Male Achievement Fellowship](#), a program for social entrepreneurs dedicated to improving the life outcomes of Black men and boys.



The [Open Society Foundations](#) and [Bloomberg Philanthropies](#) commit \$30 million each to helping young Black and Latino men through New York City's [Young Men's Initiative](#).



The [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#) and the [Open Society Foundations](#) launch the Black Male Engagement (BME) Challenge in Philadelphia and Detroit, to celebrate and leverage existing assets of Black men in their communities.



The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. opens to the public.



The [Opportunity Agenda](#), with funding by the [Open Society Foundations](#), releases [Opportunity for Black Men and Boys: Public Opinion, Media Depictions, and Media Consumption](#), laying out evidence that Black males are grossly overrepresented in depictions of criminality and violence in the media, as compared to documented reality.



Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu launch [Cities United](#) to eliminate violence-related deaths of Black males. Partners include [Casey Family Programs](#), [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), and [Open Society Foundations](#).



The [Heinz Endowments'](#) African American Men and Boys Task Force releases [Portrayal and Perception: Two Audits of News Media Reporting on African American Men and Boys](#).



The [California Community Foundation](#) launches [BLOOM](#), a five-year, \$5 million initiative to redirect Black male youth involved with the L.A. County probation system.

2012



The shooting death of unarmed Florida teen, Trayvon Martin, captures national attention and ignites debate on racial profiling and "stand your ground" laws.



The 2025 Network for Black Men and Boys and [Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity](#) file an amicus brief in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold the university's admissions procedures that use race as one of many factors in creating a diverse class of freshmen.



The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) commits \$9.5 million to [Forward Promise](#), a three-year initiative to improve the health and success of boys of color.



The [Open Society Foundations](#), in partnership with [Root Cause](#) and [PolicyLink](#), launches the Leadership and Sustainability Institute, a national network ensuring the growth, sustainability, and impact of leaders and organizations working to improve life outcomes and create systemic change for Black men and boys.



[Foundation Center](#) and the [Open Society Foundations](#) release [Where Do We Go From Here? Philanthropic Support for Black Men and Boys](#), examining national funding patterns in support of Black men and boys.



A [Gathering of Leaders](#) convenes 150 social change leaders working to improve opportunities for boys and men of color.



The [Open Society Foundations](#) hosts the inaugural [Black Male Achievement Innovation & Impact Forum](#), gathering philanthropy, government, business, and nonprofit leaders to build on momentum in the field.

2013



The [American Values Institute](#), [Open Society Foundations](#), [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), and [Ford Foundation](#) host [Black Male Re-Imagined II](#), a media and communications conversation about Black male perceptions.



The [Open Society Foundations](#) and [Foundation Center](#) launch [BMAfund.org](#), a web portal dedicated to strengthening the field of Black male achievement.



Leaders of 26 foundations gather in Chicago and pledge to form a national alliance addressing issues facing boys and men of color. This alliance becomes known as the [Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color](#).



A federal civil rights case puts the New York Police Department's racially discriminatory stop-and-frisk practice on trial.



George Zimmerman is acquitted in the killing of Trayvon Martin, leading to nation-wide protests. [President Obama responds to the verdict](#), addressing racial disparities in the application of criminal laws and the need for greater support of young Black men.



Under the leadership of Trabian Shorters, Vice President of Communities at the [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), [BMe Community](#) spins off from the foundation to become a nonprofit enterprise, focused on investing in Black men and promoting an asset-framing approach to the BMA field.



October is declared Black Male Achievement Month. #bmaoct



The Leadership and Sustainability Institute is rebranded as the Institute for Black Male Achievement (later known as the [Campaign for Black Male Achievement](#)).

2014



In his [State of the Union address](#), President Obama announces that he is reaching out to foundations and corporations on a new initiative to support young men of color.



The critically acclaimed documentary, [American Promise](#), premieres on PBS and launches Black Male Achievement Week. #BMAweek



Oakland hosts a [Black Male Achievement StartUp Weekend](#), the first hackathon dedicated to how technology can improve the lives of Black males.



A jury finds Michael Dunn guilty of second-degree attempted murder in the shooting death of Jordan Davis, another Black male Florida teen.



[Cities United](#) holds its inaugural convening to address the tragic number of violence-related deaths of young Black men.



President Obama launches the [My Brother's Keeper](#) initiative, a public-private partnership supporting young men of color.



The [Open Society Foundations](#) and [Foundation Center](#) release the field-building report [Building a Beloved Community: Strengthening the Field of Black Male Achievement](#).



The My Brother's Keeper Task Force presents its initial assessments and recommendations in a [report to the President](#).



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement selects its first cohort of BMA Innovators, who present their work at the "Investing in Black Male Achievement" Social Impact Exchange pre-conference.



An unarmed Michael Brown is shot dead by police, leading to protests in Ferguson, Missouri and calls for justice.

2015



The [Campaign for Black Male Achievement](#) spins off from the [Open Society Foundations](#) as a stand-alone organization.



The My Brother's Keeper Task Force releases a [one-year progress report](#) to President Obama.



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Foundation Center release the research brief [Quantifying Hope: Philanthropic Support for Black Men and Boys](#).



President Obama launches a new nonprofit, the [My Brother's Keeper Alliance](#).



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement selects its second cohort of [BMA Innovators](#), whose work demonstrates powerful results in improving the life outcomes of Black men and boys.



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement develops a report tracking city efforts across the country that advance Black Male Achievement in [The Promise of Place: Cities Advancing Black Male Achievement](#).

2016



More than 2,000 people attend [MLK Now](#), an event celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and exploring his message in the current landscape, hosted by Blackout for Human Rights and the Campaign for Black Male Achievement.



With seed funding from [The California Endowment](#), the Campaign for Black Male Achievement launches the [BMA Health & Healing Strategies Initiative](#) to increase the health, healing, and well-being of BMA leaders.



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement releases a new report, [Heard, Not Judged: Insights into the Talents, Realities, and Needs of Young Men of Color](#), exploring what is needed to help young men of color overcome adversity and accomplish their goals.



Police shootings of two Black men, Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota, in consecutive days, spark grief, outrage, and protests.



Donald Trump is elected president of the United States.

2017



The [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#) leads and promotes a [National Day of Racial Healing](#) on January 17.



New York becomes the [first state](#) to adopt My Brother's Keeper. The 2016-2017 budget includes \$20 million to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.



The City of Seattle launches [Our Best](#), an initiative focused specifically on improving life outcomes for young Black men.



The [William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust](#) commits more than \$5 million to making a difference in the lives of young Black men.



White nationalists and counterprotesters clash in Charlottesville, VA. President Trump criticizes "many sides."



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Foundation Center publish the latest data and insights on foundation funding for Black men and boys in the 2017 edition of [Quantifying Hope](#).



With support from the [Kresge Foundation](#), the [National League of Cities](#) releases [The City Leader's Compass to the My Brother's Keeper Landscape](#), highlighting tangible steps cities can take to change systems and improve outcomes for boys and men of color.

2018



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement releases a new [Promise of Place](#) report, finding that cities have increased investment and action supporting Black men and boys.



In partnership with the [Skillman](#) and [Kresge](#) Foundations, the Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Torch Enterprises launch the [Detroit Black Male Equity Initiative](#) as a strategy to infuse wealth building and ownership into the BMA field.



The *New York Times* publishes [data](#) that Black boys in America, even in wealthy families, earn less in adulthood than white boys with similar backgrounds.



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement celebrates its [10-year anniversary](#).

2019



Stephen Curry, John Legend, and others join President Obama at [MBK Rising!](#), the MBK Alliance's first national gathering in Oakland, CA.



Investor Robert F. Smith [commits](#) to paying off student debt for Morehouse College's graduating class.



Oprah Winfrey [donates](#) \$13 million to Morehouse College; her endowment is the largest in the school's history.



Echoing Green hosts the inaugural [Black Male Achievement Convening](#) in Baltimore, celebrating social entrepreneurship.

2020



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement announces that it will [sunset](#).



The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black people at the hands of the police spark international protests against police brutality and systemic racism.



Mackenzie Scott [announces](#) \$1.7 billion to nonprofits, mostly for those fighting for [racial equity](#).



Corporations, including Paypal, Microsoft, and Salesforce, [commit](#) hundreds of millions of dollars for [racial equity](#).



The Campaign for Black Male Achievement and Candid launch the [BMA Legacy Collection](#), containing more than 250 resources to support the future work of Black male achievement.

**For more research, data, and insights
about Black male achievement,
visit bma.issuelab.org**