

Supporting Men of Color Along the Educational Pipeline: Research and Practice

A student's pathway into and through college often has speed bumps, twists, and turns. As students develop and move from middle school to high school and beyond, they often face personal, financial, academic, and other challenges that can interfere with their progress. Academic and social supports can help students to prepare for the academic rigors of higher education and beyond.¹ Programs that work with individual students and “meet them where they are” can be effective supports to elevate students toward academic excellence. When considering pre-college and college students' development, no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status, it is important to recognize that it is in times of challenge that students truly grow and move from one developmental stage to another.² It is the job of practitioners, teachers, professors, and mentors not only to provide a supportive environment for students but to challenge them to reach their fullest potential.³ Nationally, numerous programs seek to achieve this goal, and this brief highlights several organizations from the National College Access Network specifically working with men of color—the focus of this brief. The goal is to highlight these programs that have been successful in working with men of color along the educational pipeline (see Figure 1) and to hear the voice of practitioners—those who work on the ground each day to ensure student success as well as policy researchers who highly support these efforts. The

role of these organizations is to help students gain admission into college, obtain sufficient financial aid, overcome personal challenges, academically succeed, and to graduate from college in a timely manner—all in an effort to help students reap the benefits of a college degree.⁴

Although men of color face many similar challenges, they are not a monolithic group, and it is important that these differences be taken into account when designing program supports or policy interventions. This brief outlines recent research on men of color in terms of access to and success in higher education, specifically pre-college programs and research/policy initiatives designed to address these issues, and interviews from practitioners and researchers who work directly with men of color and the issues they face. This brief is primarily written for college access practitioners and provides another tool in practitioners' toolboxes to support them on the front lines, working to elevate students every day.

The importance of a college education is greater than ever before, especially as our nation requires a more highly educated workforce and needs to reclaim our leadership position in the global knowledge economy. Although these macro issues often are discussed on the policy level, it is on the micro level where change is really happening and where the success of each and every student contributes to our nation's goals.

¹M. Savitz-Romer, J. Jager-Hyman, and A. Coles, “Removing Roadblocks to Rigor: Linking Academic and Social Supports to Ensure College Readiness and Success,” Pathways to College Network (Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), 2009).

²A. W. Chickering and L. Reisser, *Education and Identity* (2nd edition) (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

³N. Sanford, *Where Colleges Fail: A Study of the Student as a Person* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1968).

⁴IHEP, *The Investment Payoff: Reassessing and Supporting Efforts to Maximize the Benefits of Higher Education for Underserved Populations*. Released at the National Summit for the Investment Payoff, Washington, DC



Pathways
to College
Network

IHEP
INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY



National
College
Access
Network

Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.

When considering students at high risk of dropping out or stopping out of school, much research in recent years has highlighted that men of color specifically face great barriers gaining access to and succeeding in higher education. Research abounds with data, personal stories, and focused initiatives outlining the complex social, familial, psychological, and economic challenges facing young men of color.⁵ The College Board, *Excelencia* in Education, and the Lumina Foundation have commissioned research on these issues and convened policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to call for action. Among students who reach higher education, male students have increasingly fallen behind their female counterparts once enrolled, and this gap persists across all racial and ethnic groups. In the past 10 years alone, males of color specifically have consistently enrolled in bachelor's degree programs and graduated from college at a lower rate than females.⁶ Given these trends, many colleges and universities, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and other organizations have made strides in providing programs and resources that support men of color who are pursuing a college credential.

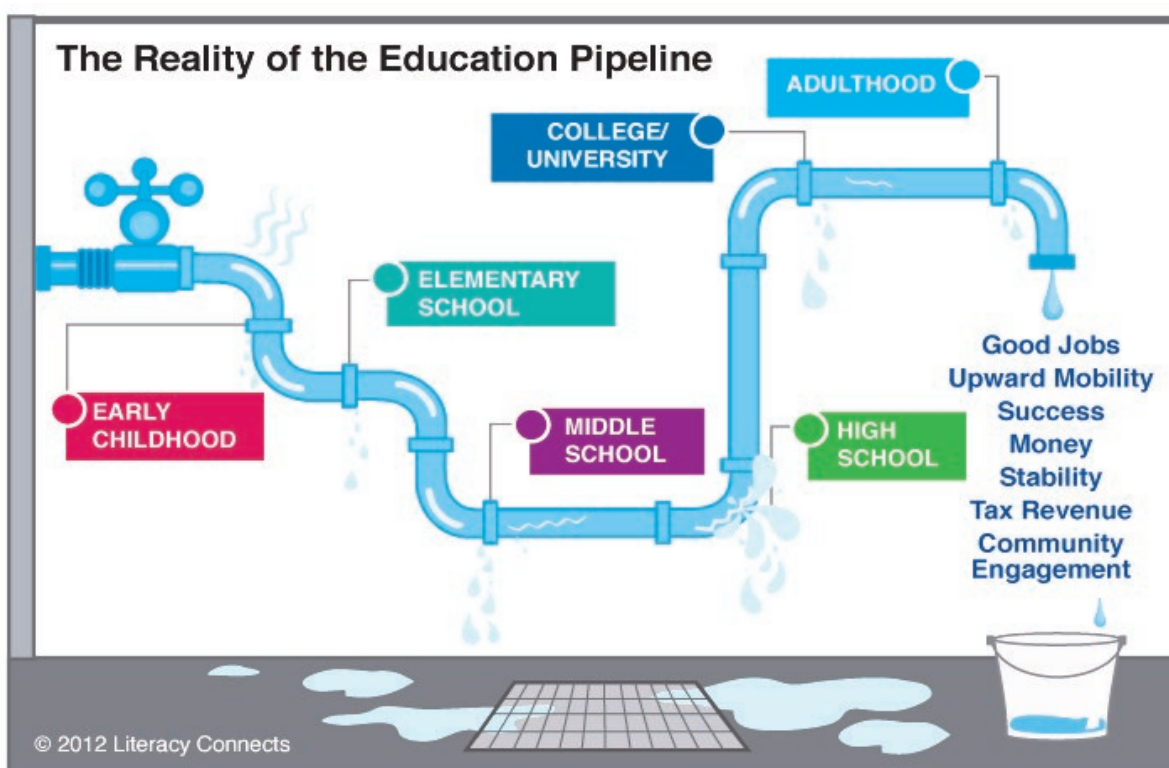


Figure 1. The Reality of the Education Pipeline
Source: Literacy Connects⁷

⁵College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, *Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color: Reflections on Four Days of Dialogue on the Educational Challenges of Minority Males* (Washington, DC: College Board, 2010).

S. R. Harper, *Black Male Study Success in Higher Education: A Report from the National Black Male College Achievement Study*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education, 2012).

V. B. Saenz and L. Ponjuan, *Men of Color: Ensuring the Academic Success of Latino Males in Higher Education*. (Washington, DC: IHEP, 2012).

⁶College Board, *Educational Experience of Young Men of Color: The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color: A Review of Research, Pathways, and Progress* (New York: College Board, 2011).

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Condition of Education 2012* (NCES 2012-045), Indicator 47.

⁷Literacy Connects. *The Reality of the Education Pipeline*. (Tuscon, AZ: Literacy Connects). Retrieved from <http://literacyconnects.org/why/the-reality-of-the-education-pipeline-2/>

Men of Color

A recent research publication by the College Board on the “Educational Crisis Facing Young Men of Color” explains that men of color face a “third America” where they “live outside the margins of our economic, social, and cultural systems”⁸ and are being underserved throughout the U.S. education system. This crisis remains a major issue, but by identifying successful policy interventions, programs, and initiatives, future prevention is a possibility.

Among and within these groups there is great diversity of culture, language, and heritage. For example, Native American students are represented in over 565 federal as well as hundreds of non-federally recognized tribes.⁹ Their indigenous language, culture, and tribal affiliation vary by region and reservation. It is therefore impossible to lump Native Americans into one group and speak to the commonalities and differences in an authoritative way without recognizing that each tribe, family, and community shares a special bond that is difficult for outsiders to understand. Native American students make up 1.1 percent of all undergraduate students in the United States and 0.6 percent of all postbaccalaureate students.¹⁰ In 2009, there were 77,000 Native American males and 113,000 females in undergraduate education. In terms of academic preparation, 46 percent of Native Americans were enrolled in at least one developmental course in 2007–2008, which is the largest percentage of any racial/ethnic group.¹¹ (As a point of comparison, just over half of all college students require enrollment in at least one remedial course.¹²)

Asian American and Pacific Islander American (AAPI) students, however, often face a different challenge—the “Model Minority Myth.” This myth includes a dominant “narrative about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in higher education as...a racial group with disproportionately high enrollment in highly selective, four-year institutions and such academic fields as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).”¹³ In fact, some students may choose not to “check the box” indicating that they are Asian in an effort to shield themselves from the high academic expectations of some colleges and universities during the admission process.¹⁴ AAPI students are also an incredibly diverse group. For the 2010 fall undergraduate enrollment, 1,088,000 students were AAPI, 53 percent women and 47 percent men. In 2009–2010, 117,422 AAPI students (more than half of whom were women) graduated with an undergraduate degree, making up 7.3 percent of all undergraduate students.¹⁵ Of the 25 groups classified as Asian American in 2010 U.S. Census, the highest educational attainment rates for a bachelor’s degree were among Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, and Thai. For Pacific Islanders, the highest group was Native Hawaiian. In terms of academic preparation, 43.9 percent of AAPI students have or plan to take a developmental reading course and 37.6 percent an English-language course in 2009. By 2050, the U.S. AAPI population is expected to reach 40 million, and as such is a group of great interest in our education system. From 2009 to 2019, AAPI college enrollment is expected to increase by 30 percent of all undergraduates.¹⁶

⁸College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010, p. 2.

⁹Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Directory (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OIS/TribalGovernmentServices/TribalDirectory/index.htm>.

¹⁰National Indian Education Association, *The Condition of Native Education in 2011*. (Washington, DC: NIEA, 2011). Retrieved from www.niea.org.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²L.T. Bustillos, *Rethinking Remedial Education: The Role of MSIs in Serving Underprepared Students in the 21st Century*. (Washington, DC: IHEP, 2012).

¹³The National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, *Federal Higher Education Policy Priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community* (CARE, 2010), p. 3. Retrieved from http://www.apiasf.org/CAREreport/2010_CARE_report.pdf.

¹⁴The Associated Press. *Some Asians’ college strategy: Don’t check ‘Asian’*, (USA Today, 2011 December 4). Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/story/2011-12-03/asian-students-college-applications/51620236/1>

¹⁵U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). *The Condition of Education 2012* (NCES 2012-045). Indicator 47.

¹⁶National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE), *The Relevance of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the College Completion Agenda*. (New York, NY: CARE, 2011). College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010

African American men historically and currently face challenges in our K–12 and postsecondary education systems.¹⁷ African American males make up 10.4 percent of undergraduates and have a 47 percent six-year graduation rate. African American males are graduating at significantly lower rates than their female counterparts.¹⁸

As paradigms are shifting, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are seeking to move away from a more deficit perspective when discussing African American males¹⁹ and instead are focusing on the many accomplishments and the positive ways in which individuals, organizations, institutions, and K–12 schools can change inequalities and support students to reduce social, economic, political, and racial hurdles. However, when considering that African American males make up 13.6 percent of the US population and 40.2 percent of prisons,²⁰ it is clear that much more attention needs to be paid to the inequities of opportunity within our educational system.

Hispanic/Latino students have become the largest minority group in the U.S. higher education system, representing 2 million college students or 16.5 percent of all enrollments.²¹ In the future, the growth of this population is anticipated to exceed that of other racial groups for many years to come.²² Although Latino males are an increasing proportion of the U.S. population, they have the lowest high school graduation rate, lowest college enrollment rate, and lowest college graduation rate of any group.²³ Three out of five associates or undergraduate degrees earned by Latinos were awarded to females. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

reported that 19 percent of Hispanic males between the ages of 16 and 24 dropped out of an institution of education, which includes both high school and college dropouts.²⁴ Latino males once attended college at higher rates than women; however, in 2009 only 42.2 percent of Latino student undergraduates were male, while females were represented at higher numbers (57.6 percent).²⁵ Therefore, the success of Latino males is important when considering barriers in access to and success in higher education, and also considering the important role that all Latinos will play in reaching the nation’s attainment goals.²⁶

Programs to Support Men of Color

As noted in Figure 1, the greatest leak in the educational pipeline occurs between high school and college. When considering access to and success in higher education, pre-college programs’ (either in middle school or high school) core missions are often to provide academic and/or social supports to prepare students for what to expect and how to be prepared for college. In addition, research and policy organizations play an important role in access and success by conducting research, advocating, and informing policies that affect men of color in that critical point between high school and college.

Some reasons to explain such a leak in the educational pipeline during high school could include students dropping out of high school, deciding not to attend college, not able to attend college because of financial or academic difficulties, or in some cases students may just choose other vocational

¹⁷J.E. Davis, *The American Male Imperative: Implications for Addressing Retention and Success*. (APLU, n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.aplu.org/document.doc?id=2013>.

¹⁸College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010.

¹⁹See, for example, Shaun Harper’s antideficit achievement framework at <https://gse.penn.edu/equity/sites/gse.penn.edu/equity/files/publications/bmss.pdf>.

²⁰Huffington Post Crime. *Michelle Alexander: More Black Men are in Prison today than were Enslaved in 1850*. (Huffington Post, 2011 Oct 12). Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/12/michelle-alexander-more-black-men-in-prison-slaves-1850_n_1007368.html

²¹R. Fry and Lopez, M.H., *Hispanic Students Enrollments Reach New Highs in 2011*. (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2012 Aug 20.

²²*Excelencia in Education, Factbook: Condition of Latinos in Education* (Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education, 2008). Retrieved from http://www.edexcelencia.org/sites/default/files/Excelencia-2008_FactbookV2mm.pdf.

²³Saenz and Ponjuan, 2012.

²⁴C. Chapman, Laird, J., Ifill, N., and KewalRamani, A., *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972–2009*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2012-006). Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

²⁵Saenz and Ponjuan, 2012.

²⁶D. Santiago and P. Callan, *Benchmarking Latino College Completion* (Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education, 2010). Retrieved from http://www.edexcelencia.org/sites/default/files/benchmarking_latino_college_completion-execsummary.pdf.

tracks. No matter the reason, many organizations are designed to meet students where they are and provide them with the tools to be prepared for the next step in their academic journey. The following section highlights four National College Access Network programs that work tirelessly to address the needs of all students, with a particular emphasis on men of color. Two of the programs are pre-college programs, one a scholarship/access provider, and the fourth a research and policy organization that focuses on these important issues from a policy perspective.

**Interview with Carmen Lopez, Executive Director
College Horizons, Inc.
www.collegehorizons.org**

College Horizons (CH) is a college admissions program designed for Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students. Located in New Mexico, CH has served more than 2,000 Native students since 1998. Annually, CH works with between 200 and 300 new high school students, of whom 70 percent are female. In recent years, CH has made a strong effort to increase the number of males in the program by hiring Native male staff and focusing on the needs of males in the admissions process.

How does your program develop or adapt college access and success strategies to specifically serve Native American men?

A. Building Awareness Among College Admission Officers, College Counselors, and Native Educators: Faculty Orientation-

The CH executive director lectures on the 'Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation of Native Students' and the 'Unique Issues of Identity and Tribal Enrollment in College Admissions' to more than 150 college admission officers. During these lectures, the director provides demographic and statistical information on the status of Native America, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian students, giving particular emphasis to issues that affect Native boys in high school and Native men in college. Faculty members discuss risk factors, and CH leadership provides strategies to mentor the students in the program.

B. Matching Advisor-Advisee – At each program, 150 students and faculty work together as a cohort, which is then divided into nine small groups (consisting of 10 students and six faculty) with each student assigned to an advisor for individual instruction. The CH staff make deliberate decisions on the placement of boys within the small groups to match them well with other students (of both genders) and with male or female faculty mentors who have a particular background (e.g., tribal affiliation, cultural experience, first generation, family similarities), skill set, or personality that will provide the student with the best “match” and mentorship.

C. Building Awareness Among Girls and Boys: Talking Openly and Honestly With Students – During the program, the

director addresses directly with the entire cohort many of the issues plaguing Indian Country. These issues include alcoholism and substance abuse, domestic violence, diabetes and obesity, racism, jealousy, poverty and unemployment, and lack of economic development on reservations. However, the program also addresses the strength and resilience of Native peoples, including the sovereignty of Tribal Nations, self-determination, culture and ceremonies, languages, and the beauty that makes Native peoples unique. She speaks openly with the students about the “Good and Bad of Being an Indian” and highlights the good and bad things that the students expressed in their personal essays. She then speaks about the “Indian Male Crisis” and asks the students a series of questions on what they have noticed about the boys/men in their families, schools, and communities, and she presents the same demographic data that she presented to the faculty. She congratulates the boys for being at CH, calls upon the girls to give them their support, and stresses that we need to go back to our communities with the same message: We need to take care of each other. The students are quite responsive to this “lecture”—they know, feel, and see the problem, but they often do not realize how chronic the problem is and are not aware that people are researching the problem.

D. Tough Love and Kick-in-the-Butt Attitude: Teaching Self-Reliance and Fostering Resiliency –

Many of the male students in the program are at a crossroads and need the extra support, cheerleading, love, and tough love of an adult. The director models this tough love with the boys in particular; she holds a “boys only” meeting to go over the high expectations; meets with certain boys one-on-one to relate to them and challenge them; and calls upon the repeat participants (often two or three students) and male CH college interns to serve as role models, step up to volunteer, be helpful to faculty at the program, and socialize with kids who are feeling homesick or shy or are acting up.

What cultural elements are important to be aware of when working with Native American men?

This is a difficult question to answer because there is not a single culture for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, or Native Hawaiians. Native America represents well over 1,000 unique Tribal Nations and indigenous communities. CH does not use a pan-Indian model; rather, we believe in Nation building—building the capacity of Native Nations through education.

We are respectful of our differences as Native peoples and encourage the students and faculty members learn about our unique Nations, history, culture, language, and traditions.

Respect Cultural Diversity and Do Not Make Assumptions

on Cultural Competency – When working with Native men, it is important to understand who they are and where they come from—for instance, how they introduce themselves (in their language or not, with their clans or not)—and use that as the starting place to address them culturally. Next, do not make assumptions about their cultural competency. With 75 percent of Native Americans living off reservation/homelands, we cannot assume that the students are either “traditional” or “highly assimilated.” Native families often keep ties to their families, communities, and tribal homelands even if they live off reservation or have grown up in urban areas. In the CH application, we ask the students directly about their connection to their Native community and culture.

Identity Development, Tribal Enrollment (Political Status), and Cultural Fluency

– It is critical to understand the complexity of Native identity development, especially among the Native Millennial youth. The political status of Native peoples makes them more than simply a racial/ethnic group. David Wilkins sums it well: “Indian peoples are Nations, not minorities.” Does a young man identify with a particular Tribal Nation? Is he an enrolled member of that Nation? Do Native youth identify as multiethnic? How do they feel they are perceived by others as Native, and how do they then perceive themselves as Native? Have cultural or traditional teachings shaped their worldview? How do they think of themselves culturally—do they think they know a lot about their culture, some, or just a little to none?

Culturally Appropriate Curriculum

– The National Indian Education Association has standards that outline the development and incorporation of a culturally appropriate curriculum. However, curriculum development needs to be established with trained Native educators who have worked with Native youths, especially males. There is not a one-size-fits-all curriculum to implement when working with Native students; it must meet the needs of the students being served.

What guidance would you give to programs looking to do outreach or provide support specifically to Native American men?

The organization needs to understand the history of Native peoples and the particular tribes/communities that it wants to serve. The organization needs to understand and fully support Tribal sovereignty and the self-determination of Native peoples. This means the organization needs to develop a relationship at the local level with the Tribal Nation or departments it wants to serve. Organizations need to understand that for more than 500 years, outside organizations have been trying to “support” Native people, and the results have ranged from genocide (through education) to a “save-the-Indian” mind-set. Support for Native American men must be done in collaboration with other established efforts that are working within the Native community. Trust with Native communities must be established in working with Native children in particular. The organization’s work must align with and support the overall self-determination and sovereignty of Native Nations. At CH, our summary of this belief is ‘College Pride, Native Pride’—we believe that higher education can transform individual lives and also build the capacity of the people of Indian Country.

-Carmen Lopez, College Horizons

Interview with Phong Luu Program Specialist for Outreach and Community Relations

**Asian American Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund
(APIASF)**

www.apiasf.org/scholarship_apiasf.html

A Scholarship fund for AAPI undergraduate education. “APIASF works to create opportunities for students to access, complete, and succeed after postsecondary education; thereby developing future leaders who will excel in their career, serve as role models in their communities, and will ultimately contribute to a vibrant America.”

How does your program develop or adapt college access and success strategies to specifically serve Asian American/Pacific Islander men?

For outreach, AAPIASF includes imagery of males in outreach materials distributed. It is important for them to see someone who looks like them and to whom they are able

to relate, in both the college access and success programs and extracurricular and service activities. Often, AAPI males do not have the guidance and mentorship from older males from the community and institution, and can feel lost, as if they are on their own.

What cultural elements are important to be aware of when working with Asian American/Pacific Islander men?

- A. **Stereotypes** – Asian American males and Pacific Islander males are viewed differently and face different stereotypes. When meeting with the community, it is important that you do not assume anything about the student.
- B. **Familial Obligation** – Many AAPI communities are patriarchal, and men face many obligations to the family (financial, caretaker, housekeeper, etc.). The males can be portrayed negatively because they may not be involved with other things or have time to take part in community service, and it could be because of responsibilities in the household that limit their ability.
- C. **Lack of Role Models** – The AAPI community does not have many people to look up to in mainstream media or in roles of power. AAPI males may not be fully aware of all the opportunities that are out there, and may follow the familiar path of their parents.

What guidance would you give to programs looking to do outreach or provide support specifically to Asian American/Pacific Islander men?

The biggest thing is not to assume anything about the AAPI students. The AAPI community is extremely diverse (48 different ethnicities, more than 300 languages and dialects spoken), as are the students' experiences and circumstances.

-Phong Luu, APIASF

Interview with Cedric Brown, CEO and Justin Davis, Brotherhood Program Manager
Mitchell Kapor Foundation: College Bound Brotherhood
www.mkf.org/collegeaccess/

Funds non-profit organizations that challenge young men to excel and build a college-going culture for African American males in the Bay Area.

How does your program develop or adapt college access and success strategies to specifically serve African American men?

Our College Bound Brotherhood program was created in 2008

specifically to increase the number of African American young men in the San Francisco Bay Area who are prepared for college enrollment (fewer than 25 percent of Black male high school graduates meet the basic college enrollment requirements in California). Through grant making, outreach, practitioner networking, and events for students, we aim to create a college-going culture and movement among young Black men.

The College Bound Brotherhood is composed of a network of nearly 150 college readiness organizations and programs—as profiled in our web-based app, www.CollegeBoundBros.org—that have committed to including and directly serving our focus population. As facilitators of the Brotherhood network, we provide information and financial resources to organizations in order to share success stories and strategies that best prepare young men for college.

What cultural elements are important to be aware of when working with African American men?

The degree to which African American young men are devalued, demonized, and dismissed in U.S. education systems is a national shame. Generally speaking and as with most youth, these are bright and capable students who need to establish trust and respect with leaders/elders during their interactions. They want to be valued, successful, and believed in, even when one must push through a tough veneer that belies the vulnerability and immaturity of the individual.

Additionally, young men seek relevant, applicable information delivered with a sense of purpose and/or passion. They do not want to be bored, especially by one-sided lectures. One-on-one interactions, active individual engagement, or appropriately competitive situations also help to create beneficial connections for learning and sharing. And importantly, their own journey and value should be reflected in the discourse through relevant use of African/African American culture and historical figures.

What guidance would you give to programs looking to do outreach or provide support specifically to African American men?

A. Connect with their mothers, who are tremendously supportive and want the best for their sons.

B. Push to overcome stereotypes, in mind and actions, about the range of human experiences that these young men have. Contrary to unfortunate popular belief, they're not all ruffians or rappers.

C. Make sure to have appropriate Black male representation in your staff or volunteer corps. Although everyone can make legitimate contributions to the well-being of young Black men, our youth certainly benefit from seeing others who have had similar life experiences, and staff will benefit from the inclusion of an African American male perspective in planning and ongoing work with the students.

D. Establish contacts with leading local Black churches (African American newspapers can help identify some) in order to connect with their congregations, which will provide interested families and potential participants.

E. Cultivate relationships with coaches and other adults overseeing non-academic extracurricular activities, especially sports, in which these young men participate.

-Cedric Brown and Justin Davis, Mitch Kapor Foundation

**Interview with Megan Soliz, Research Analyst
Excelencia in Education
www.edexcelencia.org**

"Excelencia in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latino students and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement."

How does your organization develop or adapt college access and success strategies to specifically serve Latino men?

Excelencia in Education develops or adapts college access and success strategies to specifically serve Latino men by

applying research and knowledge to inform policy and practice. *Excelencia* provides analysis to inform the broader public of the educational context for Latinos through one-page fact sheets that provide a snapshot of the educational progress, strengths, and areas of need for Latino students. For example, *Excelencia* has published a one-page fact sheet on high school performance, college enrollment, and the educational attainment of Latino males, available at www.edexcelencia.org/research/latino-males-higher-education.

Excelencia also identifies evidence-based practices to inform and link others committed to serving Latino students. For example, *Excelencia's* Growing What Works database provides information on promising practices at institutions across the country with evidence of effectiveness in improving Latino student success in higher education. Included in the Growing What Works database are programs that target Latino males, such as the Doorway to Success: Latino Male Retention Initiative at Monroe Community College and The Clave Latino Male Empowerment Program at Union County College. More information on these and other programs is available at www.EdExcelencia.org/Examples.

In addition, our president serves on a national advisory committee for The Center for Community College Student Engagement, part of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, which is working on improving outcomes for men of color in community colleges.

What cultural elements are important to be aware of when working with Latino men?

One cultural element that is important to be aware of when working with Latino men is the general familial expectation that they will contribute financially to the household. For Latino men, the expectation to work and contribute to family is more common than for Latinas. Compounding this cultural element for Latino males are the economic opportunities related to gender. Overall, Latinos have a lower median income than many other groups (U.S. Census Bureau, American

Community Survey). Since Latino families are likely to be low income, Latino men are more likely to enter the workforce or join the military to help support their families than to enroll in a postsecondary institution (V. B. Saenz and L. Ponjuan, “The Vanishing Latino Male in Higher Education”). Furthermore, the opportunity cost (the income that is forgone in order to go to college) is often higher for Latino males than females. For example, Latino males straight out of high school have more options for employment that pays above minimum wage, such as construction or other manual labor, than Latinas.

What guidance would you give to programs looking to do outreach or provide support specifically to Latino men?

Excelencia wants to ensure that Latino males are included in the strategies or programs and services offered. Therefore, programs need to be intentional in serving Latino males and not assume that broad program offerings will reach them without more overt outreach and support. *Excelencia* would suggest that programs looking to do outreach or provide support specifically to Latino men consider the following three strategies:

Information

- Develop a program that provides college access outreach to Latino parents.
- Co-host a college fair with a community organization located in a Latino neighborhood.

Outreach

- Expand recruitment to include local Spanish-language radio and television stations.
- Encourage Latino-based student organizations to host college presentations at local high schools.

Support and Guidance

- Provide mentors who are Latino or aware of the Latino male experience.
- Provide Latino male learning communities.

-Megan Soliz, Excelencia in Education

Conclusion

The fact that the United States has been and will continue to diversify is intensely important for higher education to not only recognize, but to have programs in place to support all students. For men of color, especially those who are achieving at lower rates than their female counterparts, programs for access to and success in higher education can be an excellent resource, support system, and mentoring opportunity to help students overcome the educational barriers in their way. In this brief, we have highlighted a few exemplary programs that can serve as resources to all of the work that supports men of color. It is the belief in the United States that education is both a public and private good, and that in the next decade the job market will require many more educated individuals to meet the needs of the workforce and our global knowledge economy. If all citizens are not supported to achieve their fullest potential, our nation’s education attainment and global competitiveness goals will not be met. We hope that the resources in this brief can serve as excellent examples of great initiatives across our nation that are targeting students of color—and specifically males of color—in an effort to change the narrative for students in the 21st century.

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Author and Acknowledgements

This Research to Practice Brief was written by Christen Cullum Hairston, Senior Research Analyst at the Institute for Higher Education Policy. The practitioner interviews were conducted by Carrie Warick, Director of Partnerships and Policy at NCAN.

Special thanks to Nathan Bunch, Research Intern for support in early iterations of this brief. Many thanks to Michelle Cooper, Alisa Cunningham, and Wendell Hall from IHEP as well as Bryan Cook from ACE for their thoughtful edits.

About Pathways and NCAN

About the Pathways to College Network

The Pathways to College Network (Pathways) is an alliance of national organizations that advances college opportunity for underserved students by raising public awareness, supporting innovative research, and promoting evidence-based policies and practices across the K-12 and higher education sectors. Pathways promotes the use of research-based policies and practices, the development of new research that is both rigorous and actionable, and the alignment of efforts across middle school, high school, and higher education in order to promote college access and success for underserved students.

About the National College Access Network

The National College Access Network (NCAN) is a partner organization of the Pathways to College Network. Incorporated in 1995, the mission of the NCAN is to build, strengthen, and empower communities committed to college access and success so that all students, especially those under-represented in postsecondary education, can achieve their educational dreams. Through advising and financial assistance, our members share a commitment to encourage and enable students to set and achieve educational goals. For more about NCAN, please visit www.collegeaccess.org.