

Building Better Boyhood Programs

Evaluation of Programs Funded by the African American
Men and Boys Task Force Initiative

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APPENDIX A | Evaluation Methods

In support of the African American Men and Boys Task Force (AAMBTF) initiative, the evaluation was designed to assess a subset of AAMBTF grantees' implementation processes and progress toward programmatic goals, and to examine their outcomes across each of the four priority areas. The evaluation design was guided by the following primary research questions:

1. How successful has each grantee been in executing its proposed implementation plan?
2. How successful has each grantee been in reaching its stated goals?
3. What collective impact have the AAMBTF programs had within each priority area?

The evaluation described in the main report examines how well programs implemented their planned activities (process evaluation), and assesses the impact that the programs had on participants (outcome evaluation). RAND's team worked collaboratively with each grantee to articulate specific program goals. After each grantee specified the overarching goals, we worked together to develop specific objectives and to identify indicators that could be used to measure progress in each goal area. The goals, objectives, and indicators were documented in a matrix that provided the basis for the quarterly progress report format described below. The process also provided an opportunity for grantees to receive technical assistance in areas of need related to their program or evaluation.

We used the process and outcomes data collected to develop the cross-site analyses in the main body of this report.¹ The detailed program profiles describe the development and implementation of each program (Appendix B). We used the completed program descriptions to synthesize information and identify the factors related to program context, features, and implementation processes that are described in the main report.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation component was designed to assess progress toward programmatic goals and to document implementation, including the barriers and facilitators to implementation. We used a variety of techniques to examine the implementation process, including quarterly progress reports, key informant interviews, program observations, program performance interviews, document review, and regular e-mail and telephone communication. These activities, which we will describe in more detail, varied according to the stage of program implementation.

¹ Dana Schultz and Lisa Sontag-Padilla, *Building Better Boyhood Programs: Evaluation of Programs Funded by the African American Men and Boys Task Force Initiative*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1150, 2015. As of August 31, 2015: http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1150.html

Quarterly progress reports. Beginning in the first quarter of 2012, each active grantee completed quarterly progress reports. The first section of the report asked a series of open-ended questions to allow the grantee to comment on overall implementation, any changes during the reporting period, any challenges or barriers to implementing the program, and how those challenges or barriers were or would be addressed. This section also provided an opportunity for the grantee to ask the Heinz or RAND team any questions related to the program or the initiative overall. The second section of the report had a table that allowed the grantee to report on progress toward the overall goals and specific objectives. The grantees were asked to provide both indicator and activity updates for each objective as appropriate. The indicator updates were such things as the number of sessions, number of participants, or average pretest scores. The activity updates included more-qualitative information, such as the meeting topics or project types. Each quarter, we compiled the information from the quarterly progress reports into a summary for each grantee with a progress update on enrollment, sessions, attendance, and each program component. The summary also included any outcome information available that quarter.

Key informant interviews. To understand the implementation process and overall progress, we conducted interviews with personnel actively involved in the development and implementation of each program. Beginning in the spring of 2012, the RAND team conducted interviews on a biannual schedule. For each grantee, we interviewed the program coordinator (if applicable) and one or two others who were involved in program delivery, such as group facilitators, mentors, etc. We used a semistructured interview guide focused on a variety of aspects of program implementation, including planning, the different program components, staff training, facility and/or organizational changes, program management, stakeholder engagement, information dissemination, and implementation processes. The questions covered barriers and facilitators to program implementation, adjustments made, organizational or staff changes, ongoing staff development, degree of stakeholder involvement and necessary resources.

Program observations. To understand the program setting and delivery, we observed program sessions starting in the fall of 2012 for all active grantees. Whenever possible, we observed a “typical” session of the grantee’s primary program component, usually a group workshop or curriculum session. In some cases, we were able to observe several program components (e.g., a group workshop and tutoring).

Program performance interviews. To assess program capacity and performance of tasks associated with high-quality programming, we conducted program performance interviews in the spring of 2013 with the program director/coordinator for all active grantees. We adapted a program performance interview protocol developed to assess performance of activities targeted

by the ten steps of the Getting to Outcomes (GTO) model to guide these interviews.² The interview protocol included sections on goals and objectives, implementation, planning, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, continuous quality improvement, and sustainability with specific questions in each area. Two members of the RAND team independently scored each question, then rated each area to assess performance and capacity using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from no implementation or integration to good implementation or integration.

Document review. For each grantee, we reviewed all available documents including proposals, planning materials, program descriptions, curricula, and training manuals. If these materials were not available, we used verbal reports from those involved in program planning and implementation for this information.

Regular e-mail and telephone communication. We also gathered descriptive and contextual information about implementation via regular email and telephone communications with program staff.

Outcome Evaluation

For the outcome evaluation component, we worked with each grantee to determine whether they were already collecting outcome data or planned to collect outcome data. We used an interactive process with the grantees to determine what potential data were available or could be collected to assess outcomes linked to the program's goals. There was variability across the grantees in the stage of implementation, which limited the availability of outcome information for grantees that were entering the final six months of their grant period during the evaluation process. Other grantees were still in the planning or early implementation stages at the start of the evaluation period, which allowed us to provide more guidance on selecting and using appropriate measures of knowledge, attitudes, or behavior. Additionally, the grant period for several grantees was extended via new grants, allowing us to work with grantees to reevaluate and adjust goals and objectives and improve their fit with the program. We included any specific outcome indicators in the matrix described above and asked the grantees to report on the outcomes data in the quarterly progress reports. For some grantees, we provided technical assistance related to data collection (e.g., measure selection, tool development) and analysis to improve the quality of the information provided and increase grantee capacity for evaluation.

² Matthew Chinman, Pamela Imm, and Abraham Wandersman, *Getting to Outcomes™ 2004: Promoting Accountability Through Methods and Tools for Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2004. As of July 22, 2015: http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR101

APPENDIX B | Program Profiles by Priority Area

Communication Priority Area

1Hood Media Academy

1Hood Media Academy

Program components: Group instructional sessions, youth-generated media projects, and ceremonies/events/performance opportunities

Program length: Three calendar years

Program setting: Twice per week at a central location in the community

Program staff: CEO, creative director, assistant creative director, teaching artists, and student instructors

Program enrollment: 25 for the 2013 cohort of youth, 26 for the 2014 cohort of youth, 20 for each cycle of the 2015 cohort of youth

Age range: 14–19

Overview

The 1Hood Media Academy is designed to teach African-American youth and young adults how to critically analyze media messages, broaden their experience of media, and develop skills to create their own media. The program's goal is to improve self-image, dispel stereotypes, encourage entrepreneurialism, and provide an artistic platform for expressions of the African-American experience. 1Hood received an initial \$40,000 grant from The Heinz Endowments in 2011 for a six-month pilot of the program conducted at the August Wilson Center. 1Hood was then awarded an \$180,000 grant in 2012 for a two-year implementation period beginning January 2013. The current grant of \$180,000 was awarded in 2014.

During 2013, the program operated at a studio on the Northside before moving to a space in East Liberty at the beginning of 2014. 1Hood also changed fiscal agents in 2013, with the program now administratively housed at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, whose staff serve as the fiscal agent for the program. Theater staff meet with 1Hood as needed to discuss the program, answer questions, and informally mentor program staff on program management and implementation. Program staff for the 2015 program year include a CEO, creative director, assistant creative director, teaching artists, and student instructors.

To date, 1Hood's program has operated for more than two and a half years, starting in January 2013. Data for the evaluation, including ten quarterly progress reports, 12 key informant interviews, and four program observations, were collected for 30 months (January 2013–June 2015) and are summarized here.

Recruitment/Enrollment

For the 2013 cohort of youth, recruitment focused on schools where the program coordinator had connections and personal social networks. The program coordinator conducted outreach at these schools, asking teachers for recommendations, and the program also received referrals from other community agencies. Interested youth were asked to complete an application, which the program coordinator reviewed before selecting 25 youth for the program. Applicants from City High School were given priority because of an existing relationship with a teacher there who supported the program. During the summer, participation dropped to 18 students because of family moves, youth summer employment, and loss of interest. In the fall, 1Hood completed its work with the 12 students who were still active in the program.

To boost enrollment and meet its enrollment target of 25 for the 2014 cohort of students, 1Hood conducted active recruitment and outreach with such activities as contacting all of the students/parents on the waiting list, posting the application on the 1Hood Facebook page, and speaking to local educators. 1Hood also recruited at the “closing” ceremony, partnered with other organizations to identify youth and promote the program, and changed the application to gather information on specific areas of student interest and the student’s reasons for wanting to enroll in the program. While program staff had planned to accept 35 youth to account for attrition, only 21 youth applied for and were accepted into the program, including 18 new and 3 returning. 1Hood’s move to East Liberty from the Northside appeared to have dampened enrollment. While students had suggested that the move would not make a difference in their interest and ability to participate in the program, 1Hood lost a number of students who lived on the Northside and attended City High School. Further, the City High School teacher who was a program staff member lost his job at the school, so recruitment efforts there ended. As a result, 1Hood expanded its recruitment with presentations at Wilkinsburg High School, Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School (CAPA), Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy, PACyber, and Barack Obama Academy of International Studies. These efforts resulted in additional youth enrolling with a final enrollment tally for this cohort of 26 youth (including 20 new youth and six returning from the first cohort).

1Hood wrapped up its work with the second cohort at the end of July 2014, paused programming during August, then started again in September. Starting at that point, 1Hood began to operate on a quarterly implementation schedule in an attempt to boost enrollment and attendance. Since then, 1Hood has recruited primarily by word of mouth and through personal social networks. With students often bringing friends, the new students come in with some awareness and knowledge of the program, which makes the transition to program delivery easier. 1Hood also expanded enrollment to include young men recently out of high school, as well as a few young women. Quarterly enrollment under this new implementation model averaged 20 youth.

Table 1. 1Hood Enrollment and Attendance

	January- December 2013	January- December 2014	January- June 2015
Enrollment	25	26	20
Group instructional sessions			
Number of sessions	35	39	29
Average number of participants per session	12	16	18
Average attendance (%)	48	62	62

Program Delivery

Group instructional sessions. Starting with the first cohort of youth in February 2013, the program offered group instructional sessions with lecture, discussion, and guest speakers twice per week for two hours each session at an art studio on the North side. The curriculum was designed to develop media literacy by helping youth critically examine media and its messaging with units on:

- contemporary black male image and current events
- visual imagery and the black male
- black males and advertising
- music and black male imagery
- television and black male imagery
- film and black male imagery.

For 2013, the program held 35 of its biweekly meetings. Average attendance was 12 participants per group session, with transportation the primary challenge to consistent attendance (see Table 1). Both of the hip-hop artists who developed the program tried to attend each session with support from a high school teacher who volunteered his time. The winter, spring, and early summer sessions focused on media imagery and the criminalization of the black male.

1Hood paused its programming in August to reevaluate the program, reorganize staff, and implement methods for monitoring media output. Program staff included a director, managing director, videographer instructor, student instructors, audio engineer, and educational coordinator. Each position had a position description, and program staff were expected to attend the biweekly group sessions. 1Hood made some administrative changes as well, including shifting from weekly to hourly wages to increase accountability, requiring documentation on work activities, and developing an application and orientation process for the student staff positions. Program staff also created online forms to document attendance, conduct pre- and post-surveys on media literacy knowledge, provide templates for the theory classes, and track media output.

For the program year beginning in January 2014, 1Hood changed locations and worked on curriculum development. The program also added a teaching artist specializing in engineering, marketing, and beat production in an effort to make the projects more marketable. 1Hood used a rotating schedule with a theory class and then a practice class each week. The theory sessions used an interactive format to discuss current events as they relate to the black male experience. 1Hood also used the theory sessions for guest speakers and field trips. The practice sessions focused on instruction in photography, videography, lyricism, and production and making progress on the current media project. For the first half of 2014, 1Hood held a total of 39 group sessions, with each session averaging 16 youth. While average attendance increased from the prior cohort, the change in location to a new studio had an unexpected dampening effect on attendance. Transportation and the competing demands from school and jobs also affected attendance. Program staff tried to maintain communication with youth and parents via telephone and text conversations, Facebook, and e-mail.

Starting in the fall of 2014, 1Hood moved to a trimester implementation schedule with a new cycle starting every four months. Since then, 1Hood held 29 group instructional sessions with an average of 18 youth attending each session. The goal of the sessions was to create an inviting, comfortable, nonjudgmental place for the youth to share their perspectives and stories. 1Hood began each session with current events, then moved to media literacy during the meal portion of the session. After that, the teaching artists shifted into project work. The youth often came into the sessions ready to talk about current events and things that happened in their personal lives. As this occurred, program staff facilitated discussion, allowing the youth to analyze by way of questions and comments.

Youth-generated media. The media projects were meant to empower the youth to tell their stories and use their voices. The projects focused on the issues and ideals of young black men and attempted to frame young black men positively.

For the 2013 cohort, each youth was provided with an iPad to use in creating stories to tell through these different media outlets. Overall, program staff found that many of the youth were new to media creation and needed mentoring and instruction on the skills for the different applications. The hands-on group sessions were used to support the youth in creating different forms of media, such as videos, music tracks, and blogs. Toward the end of 2013, 1Hood began to focus on one media project per quarter, dividing the students into three groups so they could focus on music composition, producing, or videography for each project. 1Hood moved away from individual iPads during 2014, instead using a more individualized approach that involved lending cameras and laptops as needed for specific media projects. Program staff then developed specific curriculum geared to each group and media project.

At the end of 2014, 1Hood reworked the structure again to focus on youth-driven media. Program staff reported that this hands-on approach helped maintain engagement and increase attendance. The students focused on music tracks, beats, photos, videos, and blogs. The students produced videos on some of the topics covered in the group sessions (e.g., racial profiling, being

black in America, personal biographies); songs on being a black male, experiencing racial profiling, having relationship issues; and blog postings on social-justice issues. The students used the 1Hood website to launch their media efforts, allowing their work to be reviewed and commented on by those visiting the site (1hood.org).

While the new space does not have an in-house studio, 1Hood has attempted to partner with nearby professional studios for production. Additional partnerships with Hip Hop on Lock and Dreams of Hope have resulted in the sharing of resources and students across programs. 1Hood also forged a collaboration with the Warhol Museum that involved screen printing, a presentation, and a performance.

Ceremonies/events/performance opportunities. For the 2013 and 2014 cohorts, 1Hood hosted opening and closing ceremonies for participating youth. The ceremonies included guest speakers such as Grammy Award–winning rapper/producer David Banner, who led a discussion of the portrayal of African-American males in hip-hop and his music career and performances. Other events included workshops, concerts, and community or cultural events. Later in 2014, 1Hood began to focus on increasing performance opportunities for participating youth. Starting in 2015, youth had around ten performance opportunities per quarter, with all youth participating in at least one.

Progress Toward Goals

1Hood had four broad goals for its program and developed specific objectives for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the most recent cohort.

- **Goal:** To teach African-American young men about media literacy and how to analyze and critique media
 - The program enrolled 20 youth for each quarterly cohort (target of 20-50).
 - The program had attendance of 62 percent for the biweekly group sessions (target of 80 percent).
 - There was some indication from program staff that students improved media literacy knowledge; however, a pre-post survey on knowledge or attitudes was not implemented (target that 100 percent of students show improvement).
- **Goal:** To have African-American young men use social media for positive portrayals of the young black male experience
 - Youth produced videos, music tracks, photographs, and blogs and shared these media through different social media outlets (target that all students regularly post positive portrayals on social media).
- **Goal:** To instruct African-American young men in creating new media (blogging, film, music, etc.)

- Youth individually documented community events via videos or photography and produced music, then shared these projects through social media. All youth participated in group and individual media projects (target that all students complete projects for each unit).
- **Goal:** To position African-American young men to be the next generation of new media thought leaders
 - All youth participated in speaking/panel opportunities, performances, or events (target that all youth take advantage of opportunities to address issues that affect them as African-American males).

1Hood Media Academy maintained an average enrollment that fell within its enrollment goal range of 20 to 50 youth. The curriculum for the group sessions consistently focused on developing media literacy around the black male and current events, visual imagery, music, advertising, television, and film. Attendance improved over time from 48 percent to 62 percent but still fell short of the target attendance of 80 percent. 1Hood's project-based sessions resulted in all youth creating different forms of media (e.g., music tracks, videos, photography, blogs) and sharing these through different social media outlets. 1Hood facilitated different opportunities for leadership, speaking, or performing with many youth taking advantage of these opportunities.

Innovation Economy/Community & Economic Development Priority Area

100 Black Men

100 Black Men

Program components: Group mentoring sessions, tutoring and SAT preparation, senior seminars, entrepreneurial/financial skills activities and competition

Program length: Nine months each year (October-June)

Program setting: Saturdays at a central location in the community

Program staff: One contracted program coordinator, two contracted group facilitators

Program enrollment: 42–45 youth each year

Age range: 14–18 (high school students)

Overview

100 Black Men of Western Pennsylvania is a local chapter of the national 100 Black Men organization. The overall mission of 100 Black Men is to “improve the quality of life within our communities, and enhance educational and economic opportunities of all African Americans.” Locally, 100 Black Men focuses on youth mentoring and development. With AAMBTF planning and implementation grants totaling \$154,600, 100 Black Men expanded an existing mentoring program to include financial literacy for 14- to 18-year-olds. The program included (1) group mentoring sessions on such topics as public speaking, technology and networking, culture, community service, and financial literacy; (2) tutoring and SAT preparation; (3) seminars for high-school seniors; and (4) student entrepreneurial and financial skills activities and competition. The program activities were conducted on Saturdays in three-hour sessions at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Program staff included a contracted program coordinator (for the second year) who was responsible for recruitment, implementation, and data collection, along with two contracted group facilitators who planned, developed the content, and led the group mentoring sessions. The program relied on volunteers for the tutoring, SAT preparation sessions, and senior seminars. Each week, the group mentoring sessions were supported by members of 100 Black Men, volunteer business professionals, and parents.

100 Black Men’s mentoring program operated over two school years; the first ran from October 2011 through June 2012, the second from October 2012 through June 2013. Data for the evaluation—including six quarterly progress reports, five key informant interviews, and two program observations—were collected for 18 months (January 2012–June 2013) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

For the first program year (2011–2012 school year), 100 Black Men recruited participants from the prior year’s program and used its network to recruit additional youth. For the second program year (2012–2013), the program coordinator developed a more systematic approach to participant recruitment that focused on recruiting from city high schools through outreach to principals and guidance counselors, hosting orientation sessions, and distributing program materials at school events, parent meetings, and neighborhood locations. Overall, the location of the program sessions presented some challenges in recruiting participants because of limited access via public transportation.

Nonetheless, the recruitment and outreach activities helped the program reach its enrollment goal of 40–60 youth per year (see Table 2). 100 Black Men had 42 students participate during the first school year and 45 students the second. At one point during the second year of the program, enrollment reached 60 participants, but issues such as transportation, extracurricular sports activities, and work schedules posed challenges to program retention.

Table 2. 100 Black Men Enrollment and Attendance

	October 2011–June 2012	October 2012–June 2013
Enrollment	42	45
Group mentoring sessions		
Number of sessions	27	27
Average number of participants per session	19	27.5
Average attendance (%)	44	61

Program Delivery

Group mentoring sessions. For the 2011–2012 school year, the program offered 27 group curriculum sessions. An average of 19 students attended each session, representing 44 percent of the enrollment. The program facilitators followed the curriculum that had been used the previous year for the modules on communication, cultural awareness, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, networking, and technology, but added a financial literacy module that included topics such as real estate, stocks, and credit.

For the 2012–2013 school year, 27 group curriculum sessions were conducted with 27.5 students per session, representing 61 percent of the total enrollment. As a result of such efforts as arranging carpools and making reminder calls, attendance improved from the previous year. However, the program still struggled with participation rates, largely because of transportation issues, competing demands for time, and home or work responsibilities. For the program’s second year, the group facilitators revamped the curriculum to capitalize on successful aspects and reduce aspects that were ineffective. Facilitators either tailored existing materials or created

new ones to develop weekly lessons plans. With the reworking of the curriculum and materials, the group facilitators focused on varying the techniques used to deliver the content and making the sessions interactive and interesting by relating the lessons to everyday life. Each session typically involved two to four hours of preparation time for the group facilitators. Overall, students showed strong engagement and active participation in the sessions, which appeared to follow from the group facilitator's energetic and relational approach.

Tutoring/SAT preparation sessions. Each week, students were offered tutoring or SAT preparation sessions prior to the group mentoring session. The one-hour tutoring sessions were conducted by African-American engineering students from Carnegie Mellon University. During the first year, 50 percent of the youth participated in the weekly tutoring sessions and 50 percent of the high-school juniors and seniors attended the three SAT preparation sessions held in the fall. During the second year, ten SAT preparation sessions were conducted in the fall by a Duquesne University professor; an average of 15 students attended the weekly sessions, representing 33 percent of the eligible 11th- and 12th-graders. A total of 17 tutoring sessions, which started in October, were conducted over the course of the program year. These averaged 18–20 students per session, representing 42 percent of the total enrollment.

Seminar series for high-school seniors. During its second year, the program added a four-session weekly seminar for its six high-school senior participants. Conducted by an African-American high school principal, the series was offered after receiving feedback from participants about the need for assistance with senior projects required for high-school graduation and the college application process. All six seniors attended each session.

Entrepreneurial/financial skills activities and competition. During the spring of each program year, students participated in a financial skills competition that followed the financial literacy module. In the first year, five pairs of students participated in the competition, which involved developing an investment strategy and financial plan for a mock client. A panel of judges selected a winner to compete in the national 100 Black Men competition. In the second year, the youth worked the case scenario as a group. Two students who performed well on other presentations throughout the year were selected to compete at the national conference, where the team finished fourth out of 110 chapters.

Progress Toward Goals

100 Black Men had four broad goals for its mentoring program during the 2012–2013 program year and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal.

- **Goal:** To implement a mentoring program that focuses on financial literacy and skills
 - The program enrolled 42–45 youth each year (target of 40–60).
 - Weekly sessions were attended by 10–12 professionals or parents (target of 10).

- Sixty teachers, business professionals, and 100 Black Men members were involved with youth projects and activities (target of at least 60).
- **Goal:** To educate youth on financial literacy, money management, and entrepreneurial skills
 - 91 percent of youth demonstrated financial literacy knowledge on follow-up survey (target of 50-percent increase in knowledge).
 - The team finished fourth at the national financial skills competition (target of youth completing quality projects).
- **Goal:** To improve attitudes and motivations related to employment and career opportunities
 - The program exposed youth to career and entrepreneurial opportunities through guest speakers and field trips.
 - Participants demonstrated improved attitudes about employment on pre-post survey by 5 percent (target of 50 percent improvement).
- **Goal:** To improve academic and educational attitudes and behavior for youth
 - The program had 47–50 percent attendance at weekly tutoring sessions (target of 50 percent).
 - The program had 33–50 percent attendance at SAT preparation sessions (target of 50 percent).
 - Participants expressed improved attitudes about education on pre-post survey by 3 percent (target of 20-percent improvement).
 - Program was unable to collect information on school absences and GPAs (targets of decreased school absences and increased GPAs).
 - All high-school seniors enrolled in college both years (target of 100 percent).

Overall, 100 Black Men’s program met its enrollment target both years and delivered a well-structured and organized program that integrated financial literacy into a broader curriculum, offered academic and college readiness supports, and exposed youth to business professionals and entrepreneurs. In 2013, the 100 Black Men team finished fourth nationally in a financial skills competition. Further, the vast majority of youth demonstrated accurate knowledge of financial topics on a follow-up survey. While 100 Black Men was unable to track specific school-related measures, all high-school seniors who participated across the two years graduated from high school and enrolled in college.

Economic Advancement Academy—Mount Ararat Community Activity Center

Economic Advancement Academy

Program components: Economic advancement curriculum; individual mentoring; community activities/field trips

Program length: 16 months

Program setting: After school at church-based community center

Program staff: One staff program coordinator, two contracted group facilitators

Program Enrollment: 19 youth at the end of the two-year program

Age range: 11–14 (middle-school students)

Overview

The Mount Ararat Community Activity Center (MACAC) was established in 1990 to improve families' quality of life. MACAC's mission is to empower individuals and families to become productively independent, foster conditions that ensure the economic stability of individuals and families, and provide programs that support and encourage functional family values. With planning and implementation grants of \$160,000, the Economic Advancement Academy was developed to provide a culturally relevant program focused on entrepreneurship, business principles, and vocational guidance for African-American middle-school boys. The twice-weekly after-school program included an economic advancement curriculum, a business plan development component, individual mentoring, and community activities/field trips. MACAC formed a steering committee to plan and guide program implementation. The program was coordinated by a MACAC program director with contracted group facilitators leading the different modules of the economic advancement curriculum. MACAC offered a college savings account as incentive for participating in the two-year program.

The Economic Advancement Academy was conducted over a 16-month period (December 2011 to June 2013). Data for the evaluation—including six quarterly progress reports, five key informant interviews, and two program observations—were collected for 18 months (January 2012–June 2013) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

MACAC primarily recruited participants from its two mentoring programs for sixth- through eighth-graders. The program coordinator asked the MACAC mentoring coordinator to identify youth in that age range who received good grades, had an interest in financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and did not have behavioral issues. The vast majority of the enrolled students went to Pittsburgh Sterrett 6-8. MACAC provided after-school transportation in an attempt to facilitate attendance at the biweekly sessions for the students from Sterrett.

MACAC originally had 26 youth enrolled in the Economic Advancement Academy. Over the course of the 16-month implementation period, enrollment declined to a final tally of 19 (see Table 3). Program staff reported that enrollment declined during the summer because of other camps or commitments and during the school year because of other after-school activities, such as sports. The program coordinator also felt that high expectations set by program staff and a laissez-faire attitude from some of the students contributed to the decline in enrollment over time.

Table 3. MACAC Enrollment and Attendance

	December 2011–June 2012	July 2012–June 2013
Enrollment	26	19
Group mentoring sessions		
Number of sessions	22	52
Average number of participants per session	16.2	12.3
Average attendance (%)	60	63

Program Delivery

Economic advancement curriculum sessions. The economic advancement curriculum was conducted over a 16-month period with four modules (cooperative economics, personal finance, wealth creation, and business acumen), each with multiple sessions. The program sessions were typically held twice a week after school at MACAC. The cooperative economics sessions provided the context for the overall program by focusing on how African-Americans have succeeded when working together. For personal finance, the sessions included such topics as savings, budgeting, and credit. The wealth creation module covered real estate, stocks, and entrepreneurship. The business acumen sessions focused on business etiquette, attire, and public speaking. Before launching the program, the steering committee—made up primarily of the African-American business professionals who were to serve as group facilitators—met several times to develop and coordinate the curriculum and activities. They planned the program with each module consisting of biweekly curriculum sessions, field trips, and other exposure activities related to the topics. The group facilitator with responsibility for the module developed a lesson plan with interactive and group activities, as well as a pre-post knowledge survey.

The program started in December 2011, with 22 total sessions completed by early June 2012. During the school year, sessions were generally held weekly on Mondays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 p.m. in a meeting room at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church. Each session included a social dinner before the discussion. Average attendance for this period was 16.2 participants per session, representing an average of 60 percent of those enrolled. During its 2012 summer camp, MACAC conducted 18 sessions on wealth creation that focused on real estate, stock, and entrepreneurship. Only ten youth participated in the camp because of other summer plans or commitments. After

enrollment and participation declined over the summer, MACAC paused its programming in the early fall of 2012 to focus on recruitment. Upon resuming in December, program staff conducted five review sessions for both returning and new students. Overall, from July 2012 through June 2013, MACAC conducted 29 curriculum sessions with an average of 12.3 youth per session, representing 63 percent of those enrolled (see Table 3).

Business plan development and competition. To assist in building skills related to developing business plans, youth worked to create a business plan for the development and marketing of their own product idea. This program component, which started midway through the program's second year of implementation, involved eight mentors who worked with each individual or group to develop a business plan and build a prototype of the product. During the curriculum sessions, the mentors worked closely with students to prepare PowerPoint presentations of their business plans and critiqued them on both their plans and presentations. The business plan competition was held in conjunction with the annual mentoring banquet. Five judges used a scoring rubric to select the winner of a \$200 prize. Rather than selecting one business plan to implement as originally planned, MACAC decided to support all of the business plans by organizing a June marketing event that provided the youth with an opportunity to sell their products. Fourteen of the 19 youth earned up to a \$1,000 college savings account based on their overall attendance and participation in the business plan competition.

Individual mentoring. Most of the youth participated in either MACAC's mentoring program or a school-based mentoring program. For those involved with MACAC's program, mentors were supposed to spend a minimum of four hours per month with each student, but MACAC did not collect information on actual hours invested. On Saturdays, the mentoring program offered theme sessions on robotics or drama for the mentor-mentee pairs.

Community activities/field trips. For this component, MACAC planned such outings as movies, business district tours, and a business dinner to reinforce the material and topics being covered in the group sessions and to provide opportunities for participants to interact with professionals and entrepreneurs. Over spring break of the second year, MACAC took 19 students on a two-day field trip to Washington, D.C., that focused on entrepreneurship and business development. The steering committee used the program's overarching economic advancement framework to shape an itinerary that included visits to an African-American-owned engineering firm, the Howard University business school, the Newseum, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial, and an African-American-managed restaurant. Each part of the trip involved discussions and tours with African-American professionals.

Progress Toward Goals

MACAC had four broad goals for its Economic Advancement Academy and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2012–2013 program year.

- **Goal:** To educate students on economic advancement and the historical implications of economic empowerment for African-Americans
 - 19 youth were enrolled at the end of the two-year program (target of 25).
 - The program had attendance of 60–63 percent at group curriculum sessions (target of 100 percent).
 - Program was unable to collect specific information on individual mentoring contacts (target of four hours of individual mentoring per month).
 - Participants showed increases in knowledge of financial skills (25 percent), stocks (76 percent), and real estate (41 percent) on pre-post surveys (target of 50-percent increase in knowledge).
- **Goal:** To improve student academic outcomes
 - Youth maintained a 2.9–3.0 GPA throughout implementation (target of 2.5 GPA).
- **Goal:** To position students to become entrepreneurs or professionals
 - Information on pre-post surveys on education, career, and future aspirations was not reported (target of stronger aspirations).
- **Goal:** To increase students' recognition of their responsibility within their community
 - Information on youth engagement with community activities and projects was not reported (target that youth engage with community activities and projects).

Overall, MACAC's Economic Advancement Academy had an enrollment of 19 at the end of the program, falling short of its target. MACAC program staff worked to improve the organization and structure of its focused financial literacy curriculum. However, less than two-thirds of the youth attended the sessions, on average. Nonetheless, pre-post knowledge surveys indicated that many youth increased knowledge on different financial literacy topics. In terms of academic progress, all youth maintained a GPA of around 3.0, exceeding the target of 2.5. While MACAC had planned to administer pre-post surveys on attitudes toward education and employment and on future aspirations, results were not reported.

Education Priority Area

African American Male Mentoring Initiative—NEED

African American Male Mentoring Initiative

Program components: Group mentoring sessions; individual education and goal plans; individual advising; college and historical tour; conferences and events

Program length: Four years, eight months each year (October-May)

Program setting: Classroom during the school day at 11 high schools

Program staff: One staff program director, three to four contracted mentor site coordinators

Program enrollment: 112 for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, 142 for 2013–2014, 208 for 2014–2015

Age range: 14–18 (high-school students)

Overview

Established in 1963, NEED (Negro Educational Emergency Drive) is a community-based, nonprofit, minority, higher-education assistance program. NEED's African American Male Mentoring Initiative (AAMMI) was designed to empower at-risk youth to make positive life choices through mentoring, counseling, and college advising. With a \$200,000 grant in 2011 and a \$600,000 grant in 2014 that included funding for both the AAMMI program and the Access to College and Career Education (ACE), program (which was previously funded separately), the AAMMI program components include group mentoring sessions, individual education and goal plans, individual advising, a college and historical tour, and conferences and events. The weekly group sessions are held in classrooms during the school day for 45–60 minutes. NEED uses part-time employees as site coordinators at each school to plan and conduct the group sessions and organize other program components. The mentors meet together monthly during the school year to discuss curricula and coordinate activities. While there had been some turnover among the mentors and the NEED staff coordinating program activities since the grant's inception, two of the four mentors for the 2014–2015 program year had been with the program since its inception, with the most-senior staff member now serving as the program coordinator.

To date, NEED's program has operated over four school years (2011–2012, 2012–2013, 2013–2014, 2014–2015). Data for the evaluation, including 14 quarterly progress reports, ten key informant interviews, and five program observations—were collected for 42 months (January 2012 through June 2015) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Each school year, NEED identified youth at each school, primarily through referrals from teachers, guidance counselors, and principals. While NEED originally sought recommendations

for youth with good grades in ninth through 11th grade, organizers wanted a cross-section of youth to participate in the program. Once enrolled, participants were required to attend the weekly group sessions and expected to remain engaged with the program until graduation. While word of mouth among students helped with recruiting at the end of the school year, most recruitment activities did not begin until the early to mid-fall, resulting in a slow start-up for program activities for new students.

For the 2011–2012 school year, the AAMMI program had 112 mentees across six high schools, well exceeding its target of 60 youth (see Table 4). Despite the closing of two Pittsburgh high schools, which affected recruiting and created space limitations at some of the schools, AAMMI matched its enrollment from the previous year with 112 youth participating from seven high schools for the 2012–2013 school year. Implementation of the 2013–2014 AAMMI program started at five school sites in the fall of 2013, with two schools added in January 2014. By the end of the 2013–2014 school year, AAMMI had a total of 142 participants enrolled across the seven schools. For the 2014–2015 school year, the program expanded further, serving 208 youth at ten local high school sites.

Table 4. AAMMI Enrollment and Attendance

	September 2011– May 2012	September 2012– May 2013	September 2013– May 2014	September 2014– May 2015*
Enrollment	112	112	142	208
Group mentoring sessions				
Number of sessions	25 per school	35 per school	48 per school	60 per school
Average number of participants per session	Not reported	12–20	16	12
Average attendance (%)	90	90–95	71	72

* Based on data collected from October 2014 to May 2015

Program Delivery

Group mentoring sessions. AAMMI held weekly group mentoring sessions at each high school. The mentor site coordinator led the sessions, which typically lasted 45–60 minutes and occurred during a lunch or activity period, depending on the school. Lunch was typically provided for all of the group sessions. The sessions typically included discussions of culturally relevant readings, current events, and college and careers. To promote ownership of the group, youth at each school selected a name and began each session with the AAMMI pledge. The mentors were also available before or after the group mentoring sessions for individual mentoring and support as needed.

During the 2011–2012 school year, mentors used two books (*50 Things Every Young Gentleman Should Know* and *Male by Birth, Man by Choice*) to guide the weekly sessions on career exploration, the college application process, SAT preparation, school selection, and

financial aid. For the 2012–2013 school year, NEED restructured its approach to include four modules: (1) Education First (career exploration, college application process, SAT preparation, school selection, financial aid/scholarships), (2) social skills, (3) personal development, and (4) financial literacy. NEED added these modules to bring a more holistic and structured approach to the overall program. The Education First module was not a major departure from the prior year, which focused on college readiness. The modules on social skills and personal development used portions of the two books that framed the prior year’s program. The financial literacy module included budgeting, saving, investing, credit, and purchasing cars and homes. The mentors met biweekly to plan the sessions, ensure continuity across schools, and share approaches for working with the youth. Within this framework, the mentors were given flexibility to approach the content and pacing of the material depending on the needs of the group.

Starting with the 2013–2014 school year, NEED adopted the Values for Life intervention strategy for the AAMMI program. Values for Life promotes love and respect, interpersonal skills, learning orientation, self-esteem, and self reliance. The mentors received 16 hours of training on the Values for Life intervention strategy, as well as ecological systems theory, internalized racism, and culturally supported interventions. The Values for Life approach was meant to be integrated into the domains of career exploration and assessments, college application process, SAT/ACT test preparation, school selection, Rites of Passage, Education First, social skills, personal development, and financial literacy. During the first year of its implementation, program staff had 16 hours of training on the intervention approach but still faced challenges with its implementation. In the second year, NEED found that with more practice and experience, site coordinators were better able to integrate the model into their work with youth. Overall, program staff reported that the Values for Life approach reinforced what they were already doing and encouraged good discussions, interactions, and engagement of students with the program.

At each school, the mentor site coordinator conducted approximately four group mentoring sessions per month. For the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years, NEED reported attendance of 90 to 95 percent of those enrolled. For the 2013–2014 school year, NEED held an average of 48 group sessions per school, with average attendance of 16 youth per group, representing 71 percent of those enrolled (Table 4). NEED instituted better record-keeping during the 2013–2014 school year, which resulted in more–accurate attendance numbers than previous years. For the 2014–2015 school year, NEED averaged 60 sessions across the ten schools, with average attendance of 72 percent per school.

Individual education and goal plans. At the beginning of the program at each school, mentors explained the content and purpose of SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goals and led a group discussion to start to formulate intermediate and longer-term goals. Students then completed individual SMART goal forms independently and met with the mentor to develop action plans for achieving the goals. NEED reported 100-percent participation in this program component the first two years, with 88 percent for the 2013–2014 school year and 68

percent for the 2014–2015 school year. The dip for the most recent school year reflects new students who joined the program later in the school year. At the end of the school year, mentors were supposed to review the goal forms with each youth to assess progress, although completion of this follow-up activity varied across mentors. Students who had been enrolled for three years and were in their senior year of high school were assessed midyear to determine progress toward their long-term goals.

Individual advising. Part of the AAMMI program involved offering individual mentoring, counseling, and college advising in conjunction with ACE. While the intent was for the mentor site coordinator to work closely with the ACE adviser to provide individualized college readiness services, few youth accessed this AAMI program component during the first two years. At some schools, the mentor site coordinator also served as the ACE adviser, with this staffing arrangement used at more sites each school year. Since the individual advising that was provided through the AAMMI program was counted separately from the ACE program, the actual number of advising sessions each youth had across the two efforts was larger than those reflected in the AAMMI numbers. For the 2013–2014 school year, mentors held 369 individual advising sessions, with most students having two or three sessions over the course of the school year. The increase in the numbers of sessions was attributed to the need to establish relationships and trust between mentors and mentees at the two new schools involved in the AAMMI program for the 2013–2014 school year. The individual advising sessions were typically scheduled according to the needs of the student, with sessions sometimes held during outings, field trips, or other group activities to increase uptake of the sessions, which facilitated this coordination. For the 2014–2015 school year, mentors held an average of five formal individual advising sessions for the 208 participating students. Program staff note that mentors often advised students more informally when they saw them in the hall or stopped by after a group session.

College and educational tour. Each year, NEED offered eligible AAMMI youth the opportunity to participate in NEED’s college and educational tour of historically black colleges and universities and historical sites. Some participants each year were supported with AAMMI funds while additional youth found other funds to support their participation. The tour includes 13 colleges or universities and ten historical or museum sites. Program staff reported that the tour of historical sites stimulated discussion among the youth and underscored the need to better educate youth on their cultural history. For the 2011–2012 school year, 19 of the AAMMI youth participated in the tour, representing 34 percent of the eligible tenth- and 11th-graders. For the 2012–2013 school year, limited bus capacity and funding led to only seven AAMMI 10th- and 11th-graders participated in the tour, representing 10 percent of those eligible. For the 2013–2014 school year, NEED took 12 AAMMI youth on the tour, representing 16 percent of the eligible 10th- and 11th-graders. For the 2015 trip, 26 AAMMI youth participated, with 12 sponsored through the grant and the other 14 finding other sponsors or means of participating. In 2015, two seniors who had participated in the 2014 trip were selected as student ambassadors to provide leadership for all participants during the tour.

Conference and events. For the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years, NEED augmented the program with events designed to bring together all of the mentees for activities outside of school. These activities included group discussions on relevant topics, guest speakers, conferences, holiday celebrations, movie outings, drumming sessions, and sporting events. NEED also sponsored a concluding event each year that recognized graduating seniors and mentees who had academic achievements. These events were generally very well attended. For the 2013–2014 school year, NEED started an entrepreneurship initiative with 20 students from several of the schools. The participating students received lectures and instruction from business leaders at Saturday sessions on legal, financial, and accounting topics at the NEED office. The students then developed a T-shirt vending business, which continued into the 2014–2015 school year. During the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years, AAMMI youth also attended sporting events, movie screenings, and community events, and made appearances as NEED representatives in the local media.

Progress Toward Goals

NEED had three broad goals for its AAMMI program and developed specific objectives for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2014–2015 school year.

- **Goal:** To conduct academic and career goal planning to create awareness of career and postsecondary opportunities.
 - 68 percent of participating youth completed education and career goal plans (target of 100-percent completion).
- **Goal:** To provide at-risk males with emotional and social support, encouragement for their academic efforts, and positive role models through mentoring, counseling, and college advising
 - The program enrolled 208 youth for the 2014–2015 school year (target of 170).
 - The program had attendance of 72 percent for the group sessions (target of 100 percent).
 - NEED sponsored 12 eligible AAMMI youth on a college and educational tour and had 14 additional AAMMI youth participate (target of having all selected youth participate in the college tour).
- **Goal:** To improve education outcomes of participating youth
 - 100 percent of high-school seniors graduated from high school (target of 100 percent).
 - 85 percent of the high-school seniors completed a college application and 72 percent completed financial aid forms (target of 100 percent applying to college).

- 85 percent of the high school seniors were planning to matriculate in postsecondary education (target of 100 percent).

Each year, NEED's AAMMI program well exceeded its enrollment goals, with enrollment increasing from 60 to 208 youth per year. Guided by a structured yet flexible curriculum and led by a mentor, the group mentoring sessions were the primary component of the AAMMI program. While the sessions were held during the school day, students still missed sessions because of competing demands from other classes or activities. Nonetheless, for the 2014–2015 school years, reported attendance was 72 percent. At the beginning of each school year, mentors worked with the students to develop SMART goals and an action plan for achieving them that set the stage for working with the youth throughout the school year. For the individual advising component, mentors also either served as the college adviser for NEED's existing college advising program or they facilitated interaction with the adviser. The number of formal college advising sessions provided through AAMMI averaged five per student for the 2014–2015 school year. In addition, all AAMMI youth also received college advising through the ACE program. Each year, NEED supported some AAMMI youths' participation in its college and educational tour of historically black colleges and universities and historical sites, with more AAMMI youth finding other sources of support so they could participate as well. In 2015, 26 AAMMI youth participated in the tour.

Throughout implementation, NEED consistently set high targets and maintained high expectations for the youth participating in the AAMMI program. For the 2014–2015 school year, the AAMMI program achieved or came very close to achieving its main education objectives, with 100 percent of seniors graduating from high school and 85 percent planning to matriculate in postsecondary education.

Truancy Prevention Project

Program components: Youth assessment and relationship building, coordination/case management, group sessions/workshops, education support, family involvement

Program length: Continuous for 24 months

Program setting: Several days per week during school

Program staff: Two staff program coordinators/case managers

Program Enrollment: 15 students in 2013–2014, 25 students in 2014–2015

Age range: 14–18 (high-school students)

Overview

Established in 1994, the Community Empowerment Association (CEA) was founded to empower communities and families by providing high-quality, well-managed, innovative services for African-American children, youth, adults, and families. With a \$150,000 two-year grant awarded in 2013, CEA’s AAMBTF truancy prevention program was designed to increase the capacity of and leverage resources for an existing CEA truancy initiative to address the needs of African-American male youth at risk of dropping out of school due to low academic achievement, poor attendance, a lack of motivation, poor communication, poverty, low self-esteem, or grade retention. With the grant, CEA planned to expand the program for African-American males and strengthen the program components, including (1) youth assessment and relationship building, (2) coordination/case management, (3) group sessions/workshops (4) education support, and (5) family involvement. To support these efforts, CEA added two program coordinators/case managers as program staff.

After a long start-up period, the truancy prevention efforts started in March 2014 and continued through the end of the 2014–2015 school year and into the summer. Data for the evaluation—including six quarterly progress reports and ten key informant interviews—were collected for 18 months (January 2014–June 2015) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Originally, CEA planned to focus its expanded truancy prevention efforts at Westinghouse High School. CEA hoped to identify students in need of support and stabilization and then funnel them into the more structured environment of services and programs that CEA offers. Although funded in the fall of 2013, CEA experienced challenges forging relationships with school administrators at Westinghouse, which delayed recruitment of youth for the program until early 2014. Once CEA was able to get school administrators on board, the school identified the most-truant students at the school and provided a school contact person and room for the program.

With a goal of serving 30 youth per program year, CEA planned to start the program with the target group of 17 students identified by school administrators. In March 2014, CEA held an introductory meeting at the school to explain the program to the guidance counselors and students. Ten of the 17 students attended this initial meeting. At this meeting, the two program coordinators told the students that the school had recommended them for the program and that the program was focused on positive support to help them stay in school. Since starting, two students had left the school, which put enrollment at the end of the school year at 15 students.

For the 2014–2015 program year, CEA moved away from focusing on a single school, instead identifying youth through its other programs, connections with schools, and word of mouth. Many youth were identified for the program after being referred to CEA for services. Program staff met with these youth and their parents to discuss the program and conduct an initial assessment. This resulted in 25 youth participating from Pittsburgh public schools, as well as other high schools, including Gateway, McKeesport, Penn Hills, Shaler, Steel Valley, Wilkinsburg, and Woodland Hills. Enrollment at the end of the 2015–2015 school year dropped slightly, to 23.

Program Delivery

Youth assessment/relationship building. CEA considers the youth assessment and relationship building aspect of the program as a critical first step for the overall effort. Program staff assessed each student holistically to identify risk and protective factors and other needs through a relationship and trust-building process. After meeting with each student to identify the issues and reasons for truancy, program staff reported that the students' truancy issues included both school-related issues (e.g., difficulties with a specific course or teacher) and outside environmental issues (e.g., family stressors). While the program coordinators kept case notes for each enrolled student, the assessment process started out more informally, then moved to a more formal assessment process to help develop individual profiles of the students involved in the program.

To develop relationships with the students, the two program coordinators visited the school a few times a week for three to four hours each time. During this time, program coordinators met individually with the students during lunch or a free period, observed the youth in the classroom, and met with teachers. Program staff estimate that they conducted 30 individual meetings with students at the end of the 2013–2014 school year and 85 individual meetings during the last quarter of the 2014–2015 school year (averaging 3.7 individual meetings per youth). During the meetings, program staff found that the students needed attention, direction, and positive reinforcement. As the relationship between the youth and his program coordinator developed, the youth became more comfortable talking about personal issues. At the end of each school year, the individual meetings focused on stabilizing the students into programs for the summer with discussion of school credit recovery for specific classes, summer employment, and community

service. At the schools, program staff also attended Individual Education Plan meetings and parent-teacher meetings to help coordinate support for identified needs.

Coordination/case management. The coordination and case management component of the truancy program was intended to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the needs identified during the assessment and relationship-building process. For the coordination aspect, program staff facilitated interdisciplinary team meetings with agencies or other service providers involved with the youth as needed. For the case management, program staff assisted with referrals to individual counseling, educational workshops, and/or linkages to community resources.

Group sessions/workshops. Program staff also held weekly group sessions focused on increasing understanding of how education can positively affect one's life and developing leadership skills. The sessions were designed to provide a safe environment for youth to develop social skills, engage in situation-based decisionmaking, practice public speaking, and discuss cultural issues and current events. Program staff reported that the sessions provided a consistent place where participants could be themselves and feel heard and that attendance averaged 19 youth per session. During the weekly group sessions, program staff also worked with the youth to conduct research, write, analyze articles, develop a newsletter, and debate issues.

Education support. The educational support aspect of the program was meant to re-engage students in the education process and help address student academic issues. Youth participated in CEA's Saturday University, which was structured to have one hour of academic support followed by arts and athletics. Program staff also monitored school performance and attendance and connected students with academic support as needed.

Family involvement. With the family involvement component, CEA wanted to get parental buy-in on school attendance, educate parents on attendance policies, and inform them about the laws related to truancy. While program staff attempted to connect with the families of all enrolled students, they initially faced challenges engaging families with the program and its goals. Some parents indicated that they were unaware of the tardiness and truancy issues. Other parents did not engage with the program at all. Program staff reported that these parents did not return phone calls, respond to letters, keep appointments, or allow home visits. To increase family involvement and bring parents into the CEA building, CEA held a parents night and offered different workshops on topics of potential interest, such as home ownership or banking. Part way through the 2014–2015 school year, program staff began requiring that each family participate in a meeting to discuss the program activities and goals for the rest of the school year. The program coordinators also tried to work with families in terms of identifying and addressing their needs. For example, a program coordinator accompanied a parent to school meetings. By engaging with the parents in this way, the parents then felt more comfortable calling program staff later, when they needed other types of support.

Progress Toward Goals

CEA has three broad goals for its truancy prevention program and developed specific objectives for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2014–2015 school year.

- **Goal:** To provide community-based family support case management to referred African-American male youths and their families and to identify and mitigate barriers to successful parent-school communication, school attendance, and academic achievement
 - Average unexcused absences decreased from 2.5 per youth to 1.7 per youth (target that unexcused absences decrease).
 - Average tardies decreased from two per youth to 0.85 per youth (target that tardies decrease).
 - School suspensions decreased from 13 per quarter to 7 per quarter (target that school suspensions decrease).
 - Average involvement in school-based extracurricular activities decreased from 0.9 per youth to 0.65 per youth (target that students have increased involvement with school-based extracurricular activities).
- **Goal:** To support family involvement in education
 - Program staff averaged about three contacts with the parents/caregivers of participating youth per quarter and participated in school meetings with families whenever possible (target that all parents/caregivers are involved with the school system).
 - Based on a survey of teachers, there was excellent to good improvement in parental involvement for 80 percent of youth.
- **Goal:** To provide truancy prevention support, mentoring/staff guidance, personal growth/development, and family empowerment support
 - 23 students were enrolled in the program at the end of the school year (target that 30 youth per year participate in the program).
 - 85 individual meetings with students were held the last quarter with an average of about 3.7 individual meetings per youth for the quarter (target that all youth receive individualized assistance).
 - Program staff held interdisciplinary team meetings for all participating youth over the course of the school year (target that all youth receive coordination and case management).
 - Based on a survey of teachers, there was excellent to good improvement in class participation/engagement for 53 percent of youth and excellent to good improvement in behavior/citizenship for 42 percent of youth

CEA's truancy prevention program aimed to use a team-based approach to assess and provide intensive case management for targeted youth to ensure that these youth received comprehensive educational services and support. With 25 participants enrolled during the 2014–2015 school year, CEA's truancy prevention program fell short of its target of 30 students per year but served youth across more than ten local high schools. The program coordinators used individual meetings and the group sessions to forge close relationships with the youth, which facilitated active engagement in program activities. Over the course of the 2014–2015 school year, unexcused absences, tardies, and out-of-school suspensions all decreased. Overall, while CEA faced challenges engaging families in the program, they made inroads in working within the schools to support the participating youth and were able to actively engage a core group of youth and provide a comprehensive array of supports to address identified needs.

Delaney Scholars Program—Woodland Hills School District

Delaney Scholars Program

Program components: Group instructional sessions, classroom visits, academic mentoring and support, individual tutoring, family and community activities, and staff professional development

Program length: Continuous for two years

Program setting: School-based in eight district schools (one high school, one junior high school, five elementary schools, and one elementary/middle school)

Program staff: One staff program director, two staff program coordinators

Program enrollment: 102 in 2012–2013 school year, 128 in 2013–2014 school year

Age range: Grades five through 12

Overview

Woodland Hills School District (WHSD) is a public school district located in Allegheny County, currently serving more than 4,000 children at eight school locations. With a \$750,000 planning and implementation grant, WHSD's Delaney Scholars Program was developed to support the academic success and broader educational aspirations of African-American males in grades five through 12 using the Scholar Identity Model (SIM) framework. The program components include group instructional sessions, classroom visits, academic mentoring and support, individual tutoring, family and community activities, and staff professional development. WHSD hired three program staff (one program director and two program coordinators) to develop the curriculum based on the SIM framework and to implement the program.

After an eight-month planning period (January–August 2012), the Delaney Scholars Program started in September 2012 and was implemented through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. Data for the evaluation—including eight quarterly progress reports, 11 key informant interviews, and three program observations—were collected for 30 months (January 2012 through June 2014) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

For the 2012–2013 school year, program staff at each school identified and recruited students through kick-off meetings for students and parents and group meetings for school professional staff. Each enrolled student and parent signed a contract that outlined the program expectations and responsibilities. The program started the 2012–2013 school year with 96 students enrolled across the eight schools (see Table 5). The program continued to recruit additional students for throughout the school year. By the end of the 2012–2013 school year, WHSD had enrolled 102 students across its eight schools (representing 76 percent of its target of 135). For the 2013–2014 school year, the Delaney Scholars Program had 146 students enrolled across its eight schools,

exceeding their target of 135 students. However, this number dropped to 125 by the end of the school year.

Table 5. Delaney Scholars Enrollment and Attendance

	September 2012–June 2013	September 2013–June 2014
Enrollment	102	146
In-school pullout sessions		
Average number of sessions per school	9	16
Average number of participants per session	Not reported	12
Average attendance (%)	Not reported	87
After-school sessions		
Average number of sessions per school	Not reported	20
Average number of participants per session	Not reported	14
Average attendance (%)	Not reported	20

Program Delivery

Group instructional sessions. In October 2012, the program coordinators began conducting weekly group instructional sessions at each school during the school day to introduce the SIM principles to students. WHSD had planned to start earlier but waited until completing an October training session with the SIM developers to allow coordinators to receive guidance on how to incorporate the SIM framework into a curriculum for these sessions. While WHSD received some support for moving the SIM framework into a concrete program, program staff felt that, overall, the model developers provided little guidance on curriculum development. The curriculum that WHSD developed included an outline for each session that included the overarching SIM concept for the session, specific activities, and expected outcomes.

All three program staff typically attended and facilitated the group sessions. The sessions usually lasted 30–45 minutes, included activities related to the SIM characteristics, and used literature to drive discussion around relevant themes. In general, program staff appeared to have good rapport and were able to maintain engagement with students throughout the sessions. At the elementary schools, all Delaney Scholars participated in the group instructional sessions. At the junior-high and high-school levels, attendance initially lagged because of scheduling difficulties and poor academic performance of enrolled students, which precluded pulling them from class for the group sessions. As a result, early in the 2012–2013 school year, program staff decided to replace the in-school sessions with an after-school program focused more on tutoring and academic support for high-school students (see below). Starting in the 2013–2014 school year, WHSD reinstated the group instructional sessions for junior-high and high-school students,

hosting sessions during the lunch period as a way to work around scheduling challenges. Group instructional sessions for elementary students continued as planned.

Classroom visits. Program staff made classroom visits at each school throughout the school year. For a classroom visit, program staff typically observed the students to better understand academic expectations and the subject matter. Program staff also used the classroom visits to support teachers in providing individual academic assistance to students. While this approach worked well at the elementary schools, the visits at the junior-high and high-school levels proved challenging because of teacher resistance to having someone else in the classroom, more-challenging subject matter, and varying student schedules. At the end of the 2012–2013 school year, a total of 94 classrooms were visited during a three-month period (an average of more than 11 at each school). For the 2013–2014 school year, program staff completed classroom visits at four of the six elementary schools and at the junior high school, but did not provide total counts of the number of visits conducted over the course of the school year.

Academic mentoring and support. To supplement the classroom visits, program staff started to meet individually with students during the 2013–2014 school year to discuss academic achievement and strategies to improve performance and behavior in the classroom. Over the course of the year, program staff increased the percentage of students they met with on a quarterly basis from 48 percent at the high-school level and 57 percent at the junior-high level to 100 percent at both. In addition, program staff completed qualitative assessments twice over the course of the school year for all of the students, exceeding their goal of 75-percent completion. Qualitative assessments were used by staff to document students' progress in key areas of the SIM, including increased ethnic identity, internal locus of control, self-awareness, self-efficacy, future orientation, and increased academic motivation.

Tutoring/after-school sessions. As an alternative to in-school sessions for the high-school students, WHSD implemented an after-school program offering homework assistance and enrichment activities related to the SIM characteristics. During the sessions, youth had the option of working on homework or other academic tasks in the classroom or going to the computer lab to work on class assignments requiring computer access. If students needed assistance with a particular assignment or problem, program staff were available to work individually with the student or bring the problem to the group to tackle together. During the 2012–2013 school year, the junior-high program met twice a week and averaged 15 students per session, while the high-school program met three times a week and also averaged 15 students per session. During the 2013–2014 school year, both the junior-high and senior-high-school programs experienced a low participation rate of only 20 percent in the after-school program. Program staff attributed this drop to challenges such as a wide age range of students, peer dynamics, transportation home from the sessions, and competing demands from sports and other extracurricular activities.

Family and community activities. During the early part of the 2012–2013 school year, program staff held family activities such as a room cleanup day, family tailgate, and visit to a bookstore. For the second half of the year, the program stayed connected with families by

producing a newsletter and updating the Delaney Scholars website. To engage community-based partners, program staff contacted community organizations to form collaborative relationships. For example, WHSD partnered with Adaptive Behavioral Services for culturally relevant counseling services, Neighborhood Learning Alliance for training on learning styles, and the Carnegie Library for its Journey to Knowledge program.

For the 2013–2014 school year, program staff held fewer family and community activities due to loss of staff and reduced capacity. Across the school year, program staff held three family events for each school. For the high-school events, there was an average of 13 families at the events, representing about 58 percent of the students. For the elementary and junior-high program, the number of families at each event varied widely across schools, from nine (100-percent participation) to two (22-percent participation). WHSD also sent two newsletters to families during the school year updating them on the Delaney Scholars program.

Staff professional development. At the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year, WHSD program staff conducted an education and information session for teachers and staff at each of the eight schools. Program staff also conducted an orientation session for the high-school professional learning community of 16 teachers. All of these professional development sessions had 100-percent attendance. WHSD also sent two school administrators to attend the Achievement Gap Institute at Vanderbilt University led by the SIM model developers. On a monthly basis, program staff worked with the professional learning communities for junior- and senior-high schools to meet with teachers and discuss ways to teach and relate to African-American male students.

During the 2013–2014 school year, program staff continued to work with junior- and senior-high schools through their Professional Learning Communities and monthly meetings. Program staff met with 57 teachers across two sessions at Edgewood Elementary and 58 teachers at a single session with the junior- and senior-high school. In addition, program staff held two sessions for administrators at each of the eight schools. Starting in January 2014, program staff shifted from providing structured training workshops for school staff to providing one-on-one development for teachers who requested help and to assisting with the redesign of school code of conduct criteria (e.g., redefining disciplinary actions for students exhibiting deviant or disruptive behaviors in class) and criteria for the gifted program. Throughout implementation, program staff reported some resistance and defensiveness about the training topics of race and education, particularly from teaching staff at the junior-high schools. While this did not impede implementation of the youth components of the program, resistance from staff members created challenges to affecting school climate overall.

Progress Toward Goals

For the 2013–2014 school year, WHSD consolidated its initial six broad goals for the Delaney Scholars program into four goals and developed specific objectives for each. Here, we

present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2013–2014 school year.

- **Goal:** To establish a sustainable culture of academic achievement for African-American males in the target schools
 - The average GPA of participating students was 2.98, down slightly from the prior year (target of 20-percent increase from prior year). Fifty-three percent of students' GPAs rose in the last quarter of the school year.
 - Students averaged approximately 1.6 unexcused absences and two unexcused tardies per quarter (target that school attendance improves by 40 percent from the prior year). Because the attendance reporting changed, it was not possible to compare to the prior year.
 - Behavioral referrals started low, at 29 per school (down from 80 the prior year) but increased to 48 per school in the last quarter (target that behavioral referrals for participating students decrease by 50 percent from the prior year). The majority of these referrals were accounted for by 18 students (46 percent) in the junior-high who had five or more referrals during the quarter, which likely skewed the average.
- **Goal:** To create opportunities for meaningful involvement by the families of African-American male students in school and the community
 - The program held three family events, with an average of 58 percent of the high-school families attending and between 22 and 100 percent of the elementary-school and junior-high families attending (target of 50 percent of families participate in events).
- **Goal:** To develop the characteristics of the SIM in young African-American male students
 - Average scores on a measure of attitudes toward school did not change from pre- to post-survey, with students averaging 2.3 points on a five-point scale (2.3 = below-average feelings about the importance of school and course work). Average scores on a measure of future aspirations did not change from pre- to post-survey, with students averaging 3.5 points on a four-point scale (3 to 4 = important to very important) (target to increase scores by 20 percent from pre- to post-test).
- **Goal:** To create an effective, SIM-based professional development program
 - The program worked with junior- and senior-high school professional learning communities, met with 115 teachers at three schools, held two sessions for administrators at each of the eight schools, and influenced decisions on disciplinary

action and gifted program criteria (target that a cohort of teachers in each building are trained to implement SIM to close the achievement gap).

WHSD began the 2013–2014 school year with 146 enrolled students in its Delaney Scholars program, exceeding the 99 students enrolled the previous year (and surpassing its target of 135 per year). In terms of academic outcomes, students maintained an average of 2.98 GPA throughout the school year. Program staff reported that students began to self-monitor (e.g., sharing grades with program staff, taking pictures of progress reports to show to program staff) and were more engaged in assessing their academic progress during the 2013–2014 school year. However, WHSD saw increases in disciplinary referrals and unexcused absences from the prior year. Program staff noted that much of the increase was accounted for by the seventh-grade cohort, which struggled with the transition from elementary to junior-high school.

At the start of the 2013–2014 school year, the RAND team reevaluated how WHSD was operationalizing goals and worked to identify measures to assess progress in attitudes to supplement the academic and behavioral indicators. Specifically, WHSD utilized standardized measures published in a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) compendium on youth attitudes and behavior (e.g., academic attitudes and future aspirations). However, pre- and post-surveys at the beginning and end of the school year did not capture any improvements in students' academic motivations or future aspirations as scholars.

In line with their goal of creating a culture of support for SIM and academic achievement within the district, program staff actively conducted building-wide professional development with principals and district-level administrators, bringing the creators of the SIM model in to conduct training sessions. Toward the end of the school year, program staff began working with administration to redesign the school code of conduct (e.g., redefining disciplinary actions for students exhibiting deviant or disruptive behaviors in class) and criteria for the gifted program to improve opportunities for African-American boys at WHSD to succeed academically.

Leaders of Tomorrow—Rankin Christian Center

Leaders of Tomorrow

Program components: Group leadership sessions, mentoring, case management, exposure/celebration activities

Program length: Two years, nine months each year (September–May)

Program setting: Faith-based community center

Program staff: Two staff program coordinators

Program Enrollment: 74 over course of two years

Age range: 16–24

Overview

Established in 1906, Rankin Christian Center is a faith-based community center that provides a variety of services and programs for youth, seniors, individuals with intellectual disabilities, and families needing support. With a \$150,000 two-year grant, Rankin Christian Center's Leaders of Tomorrow (LOT) program was designed to provide African-American males ages 16–24 with academic proficiency, leadership skills, self-esteem, and advancement opportunities. The program included group leadership sessions, mentoring, case management, and exposure activities. The group leadership sessions were held monthly after school at the Rankin Christian Center. The program was coordinated by two Rankin staff with volunteer mentors.

The LOT program operated over the course of two school years; the first year ran from September 2010 through May 2011, the second year spanned September 2011 through May 2012. Data for the evaluation—including two quarterly progress reports and three key informant interviews—were collected for the last six months of implementation (January–June 2012) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Rankin primarily recruited internally, focusing on youth who were transitioning from its evening recreational program for sixth- through ninth-graders. Rankin also conducted outreach with a local school district to generate interest in the program. Over the two-year program period, Rankin served 74 youth through the LOT program, exceeding its target of 40. Throughout implementation, there were typically 20–25 youth involved at a time.

Program Delivery

Group leadership sessions. An average of five youth officers attended planning meetings and facilitated the monthly group meetings. The sessions typically involved speakers from local organizations and businesses who were invited to talk about their professional experiences to expose students to various career and educational opportunities. Program staff reported that the youth officers took their responsibilities seriously and remained committed to the program

throughout the school year. Program staff also reported that many of the participating youth demonstrated improvements in self-esteem and the ability to express their opinions. Attendance at the monthly meetings was an issue throughout implementation. During the last six months of implementation, the average attendance at the general body meetings was 21 youth, representing just 28 percent of the total youth served over the course of the two-year program but a much larger percentage of the active youth (approximately 20–25).

Mentoring. Rankin experienced challenges locating and retaining African-American men as mentors for this component of the program. The recruited mentors often had personal challenges at home and with their careers that made it difficult to maintain consistent relationships with the youth. Part way through implementation, the program shifted to a cluster-mentoring format, based on suggestions from the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania. This approach allowed the mentors to work with more than one mentee. Nonetheless, during the last six months of implementation, the youth averaged only one hour of contact with a mentor per month. Despite the fact that contact was more limited than originally planned, program staff reported that the mentors did serve as positive role models for the high-risk youth in the program.

Case management. The case management component primarily involved developing education and career plans and making referrals to supports and services as needed. The program staff helped approximately one-half of the enrolled youth develop education and career plans. Most of the remaining youth were ninth- and tenth-graders who the program staff felt had not yet reached the stage to initiate these plans. Overall, program staff reported making few referrals to other services.

Exposure/celebration activities. Many of the activities for this component were service learning opportunities involving both the youth and mentors. For example, LOT youth hosted an Easter celebration for children involved in the after-school program and participated in neighborhood cleanup efforts. Transportation for these activities was a challenge; most families did not have cars. Other activities included enrichment opportunities, such as an eight-week art education program in collaboration with the Andy Warhol Museum focused on photography and special effects. The program arranged an open house to allow the participating youth to share their art with family members and the community. The celebration activities included a year-end trip to Cedar Point Amusement Park for LOT youth, mentors, and family members.

Progress Toward Goals

Rankin Christian Center had three broad goals for its LOT program and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal.

- **Goal:** To improve education and employment outcomes
 - The program served 74 youth during the two-year program (target of 40).

- The program provided leadership opportunities for participants who were elected as LOT officers.
 - The program made referrals to other services and supports as needed.
 - The program had an average of one hour of mentor-mentee contact per month (target that all youth receive mentoring and tutoring).
 - 55 percent of youth completed postsecondary education and career goal plans (target of 100-percent completion).
 - 90 percent of high school seniors graduated from high school or received their GED (target of 85 percent).
 - 30 percent of graduating seniors enrolled in postsecondary education or were employed (target of 85 percent).
 - Program was unable to collect information on whether youth received college scholarships (target of 75 percent).
 - Program was unable to collect or report on whether youth received increased support from adults.
- **Goal:** To educate program participants on the importance of education in creating a positive future
 - Program was unable to determine if youth improved employment attitudes, education attitudes, and future aspirations because too few youth completed pre-post surveys (target of 50-percent improvement on each measure).
 - **Goal:** To deter criminal justice involvement among program participants
 - There was no known criminal justice involvement for LOT youth during the last six months of implementation.
 - Program was unable to determine if youth improved attitudes toward delinquency because too few youth completed pre-post surveys (target of 50-percent improvement)
 - Youth averaged 1.2 extracurricular activities (target of two).
 - 30 percent of youth had a library card, 5 percent had a driver’s license, and 13 percent had a voter registration card (target of 100 percent for all).
 - 24 percent of youth had community service hours, with an average of five hours per youth (target of 15 hours for all youth).

With total enrollment of 74 youth, Rankin’s LOT program met its enrollment target of serving 40 youth over the two-year implementation period, with 20–25 youth actively involved. Overall, 90 percent of the involved youth graduated from high school and 30 percent enrolled in college or were employed. While Rankin developed a pre-post survey on education, employment, and delinquency attitudes and future aspirations, too few youth completed both surveys to determine whether there were changes.

Project H.O.P.E.—Propel Schools

Project H.O.P.E.

Program components: Individual pullout sessions, individual education and goal plans, group instructional sessions, staff professional development, summer academy

Program length: Continuous for two school years

Program setting: School-based at each of nine Propel schools (seven K–8 schools and two high schools)

Program staff: One staff program director, three staff project and activity coordinators

Program enrollment: 171 students the 2012–2013 school year, 170 students the 2013–2014 school year

Age range: Grades five through 12

Overview

Propel Schools is a not-for-profit federation of public charter schools based in Pittsburgh, serving nearly 3,000 children in nine school locations. With a \$750,000 planning and implementation grant, Propel’s Project H.O.P.E. (Healthy Opportunities to Pursue Excellence) was developed to bring the nine principles of the Scholar Identity model (SIM: self-efficacy, future orientation, willingness to make sacrifices, internal locus of control, self-awareness, strong need for achievement, academic self-confidence, race pride and masculinity) to middle- and high-school African-American boys with the goal of preparing them to pursue and complete postsecondary education. The program included individual pullout sessions, individual education and goal plans, group instructional sessions, staff professional development, and a summer academy. Propel’s Director of Strategic Initiatives provided overall guidance to the program. Propel hired a program coordinator to oversee implementation, as well as two project and activity coordinators to deliver the different program components. The program experienced some staff turnover, with one of the project and activity coordinators leaving partway through the school year and a replacement following one month later.

After an eight-month planning period (January–August 2012), Project H.O.P.E started in September 2012 and continued through the end of the 2013–2014 school year. Data for the evaluation, including eight quarterly progress reports, 13 key informant interviews, and four program observations, were collected for 30 months (January 2012–June 2014) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Project H.O.P.E began recruitment for its program in the spring of 2012, with a goal to recruit and enroll 20 students at each of its nine schools. Students were identified for the program by teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators. Initially, Propel had a total of 184 students enrolled, exceeding its enrollment target of 180 students across the nine schools (see

Table 6). However, after attrition, the final enrollment tally at the end of the 2012–2013 school year was 172. For the 2013–2014 school year, Propel began to utilize a universal nomination process that included all teaching, administrative, and support staff. Enrollment for the 2013–2014 school year began at 170 students (just short of their target), but dropped to a final enrollment of 152.

Table 6. Project H.O.P.E. Enrollment and Attendance

	September 2012– June 2013	September 2013– June 2014
Enrollment	180	170
In-school support/pullout sessions		
Number of sessions	Not reported	48–158
Number of students with at least 1 session per week	Not reported	147
After-school sessions		
Average number of sessions per school	Not reported	31
Average number of participants per session	Not reported	12
Average attendance (%)	62	77

Program Delivery

Individual pullout sessions. The weekly pullout sessions started in January 2013 at both the middle and high schools. The project and activity coordinators spent one day per week at each assigned school. At the middle-school level, the pullout sessions focused on trying to make a connection with the youth, addressing behavioral issues, and helping with conflict management, life skills, and relating to teachers. At the high-school level, the coordinator met with students individually or in small groups of two or three to discuss a variety of issues, such as academic progress and support, preparing for high school graduation and college, behavioral issues in the classroom, conflict resolution, and life decisions. During the first year, the two coordinators met with an average of eight students per week. For the last three months of the 2012–2013 school year, participating students had an average of 3.2 contacts with a coordinator. For the 2013–2014 school year, project and activity coordinators met with the majority (93 percent) of students at least once a week per quarter.

Individual education and goal plans. For the 2013–2014 school year, Propel implemented the use of individual education and goal plans with students required to complete a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to capture their attitudes and self-perceptions as they relate to the core SIM principles. Participation rates ranged from 76 to 100 percent across the first two quarters of the school year. After reviewing this program activity, Propel found that it was not as useful as anticipated for capturing change in students’ attitudes. Instead, Propel piloted a Scholar Score Card comparing student and teacher reports on

dimensions such as self-efficacy, locus of control, and other SIM principles, with plans to implement the scorecard across all the middle schools the next school year. Propel also added self-monitoring in 2013–2014 for both middle-school and high-school participants, with students monitoring their academic progress, as well as their expectations of growth. Using this self-monitoring information, program coordinators helped students review their progress and work through challenges/frustrations.

Group instructional sessions. Starting in January 2013, after a small pilot in late 2012 at one school, the project and activity coordinators convened weekly after-school group sessions lasting 60–90 minutes at each of the nine Propel schools. During the second half of the 2012–2013 school year, Project H.O.P.E staff developed a detailed and structured curriculum that outlined how each activity and lesson plan connected to one of the nine SIM principles. While the original plan was to cover all nine characteristics during the school year, the program started later than expected, and as a result, Propel focused the majority of the sessions from January to June 2013 on racial pride and masculinity to establish a foundation with the SIM. For the 2013–2014 school year, Propel covered the entire curriculum as planned. Table 6 presents the number of after-school sessions and the average attendance for both years.

Staff professional development. Propel implemented two types of professional development efforts that were designed to supplement the existing districtwide program. First, Propel offered a two-day training conducted by the SIM framework developers for principals, instructional coaches, guidance counselors and teachers from all Propel schools; 220 staff attended these trainings in Year 1. This training served to introduce school personnel to the SIM framework and teaching techniques for discussing race and education. This training resulted in the expansion of the initial Project H.O.P.E leadership team, which helped identify students for the program, plan small group training sessions, and identify existing elements of the school curricula that could be expanded to highlight the SIM characteristics. The second type of professional development offered was small group training at each school. Propel had planned to offer a series of five trainings; however, statewide testing and scheduling issues meant that most schools held few sessions during the 2012–2013 school year.

For the 2013–2014 school year, Project H.O.P.E. hosted small group trainings with the SIM model developers at seven of the eight schools. Although attendance was strong, with 152 participating staff (100 percent) in the first quarter of the school year, participation rates dropped to 30 percent and 43 percent for the next two quarters that sessions were offered. At some schools, program staff conducted additional group or individual sessions to encourage buy-in among teachers, dispel misconceptions about the program, address issues, and further clarify the SIM program and its goals. Despite these efforts, lack of support from administration at some schools made it difficult to secure adequate space for the different program sessions. However, program staff reported that schools with more-active participation in the SIM training and Project H.O.P.E. activities better understood the program and were more willing to work to address some of the logistical challenges. At the end of the 2013–2014 school year, the executive

director, superintendent, directors of curriculum/instruction, and coordinators of behavioral supports convened as a team to begin creating a professional development series that would convey the lessons learned from Project H.O.P.E. programming, and translate the notion that “culture matters” into every aspect of the teaching and learning process at the Propel schools.

Summer academy. As planned, Propel implemented two summer academies during the summers of 2013 and 2014, which were offered three days per week for five hours per day. Program staff developed a curriculum focused on both academic subjects and the SIM framework. The summer academy was open to all Propel students in grades five through 12, with an emphasis on current Project H.O.P.E. students. Propel also provided transportation in an effort to boost enrollment and attendance. In 2013, the summer academy started with 51 students and came close to reaching its goal of 65 students. The 2014 summer academy included ten high school students and 32 middle school students, 98 percent of whom participated in the yearlong Project H.O.P.E. program.

Progress Toward Goals

Propel has four broad goals for its Project H.O.P.E program and developed specific objectives for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2013–2014 school year.

- **Goal:** To extend Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system into all Propel schools and integrate the nine SIM characteristics
 - The program enrolled 170 students for the for the 2013–2014 school year (target of 180 students each year).
 - Weekly after-school group sessions were attended by an average of 77 percent of enrolled youth (target of 100 percent).
 - 88 percent of participants (average of 16 students per school) received at least weekly pullout sessions (target of 100-percent participation).
 - Students averaged six unexcused absences for the year, showing a 50-percent increase in unexcused absences from the prior year (target that attendance improve by 10 percent per year).
 - Average disciplinary problems increased slightly, from 1.4 to 1.8 per quarter over the school year, with an average of eight referrals per student across the school year, which was consistent with the prior school year (target that disciplinary referrals decrease from the prior year).
 - Students maintained an average GPA of 2.86 throughout the first three quarters, with an increase to 3.10 in the final quarter, an 8-percent increase over prior quarters (target that GPA improve by 3 percent from the prior quarter).

- 81 percent of seniors had postsecondary opportunities, including ten seniors who were accepted to a four-year college (three with scholarships), one accepted to community college, and three attending trade school (target not defined).
- **Goal:** To strengthen the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) process in Propel's high schools through alignment with SIM
 - 76 to 100 percent of youth completed in-depth personal assessments before the activity was discontinued (target of 100 percent).
 - On the baseline assessment, students scored 3 on a four-point scale, meaning that they had good attitudes related to the importance of school/achievement, their futures, and their perceptions on their ability to take action in improving their lives (target that scores improve by 25 percent). Follow-up scores were assessed at the end of the Summer Learning Academy in 2014. Scores increased marginally from an average of 3 to an average of 3.5 for academic confidence and future orientation, and from 3 to 3.3 for self-efficacy (just below the target increase of 25 percent).
- **Goal:** To expose middle- and high-school students to career opportunities and postsecondary education options
 - 21 high-school students (38 percent) developed/updated a plan for postsecondary options (target 100 percent of eligible students develop a plan for postsecondary options).
 - 62 percent of eligible students submitted college applications (target that 100 percent of eligible students apply to college).
 - An average of 63 percent of high-school students participated in at least one extracurricular activity per quarter, 80 percent of high-school students attended college readiness seminars, 60 percent of eligible students were dually enrolled at CCAC (targets not defined).
- **Goal:** To integrate SIM characteristics and principles into the Propel curriculum
 - The program formed school-based leadership teams at each school (target that each school create and support an internal leadership team).
 - The program created a professional development course to carry the thrust of Project H.O.P.E. through the 2014–2015 year and beyond (target not defined).

With 170 students enrolled for the 2013–2014 school year, Propel came close to its enrollment target of 180 students per year. Although the program experienced some attrition during the school years, this loss was due to a small number of students who could not commit to the requirements of the program (e.g., regular attendance, commitment to the principles). Project H.O.P.E. increased participation rates for pullout sessions and group instructional sessions from the prior year.

In terms of education-related outcomes, Project H.O.P.E. improved the average GPA to 3.10 (an 8-percent increase across quarters). However, there was no evidence of improved attendance or decreased disciplinary referrals from year to year. Eighty-one percent of seniors had plans for postsecondary opportunities, with most of them attending college.

Identity, Character, and Gender Development Priority Area

African American Leadership Institute—Community Empowerment Association

African American Leadership Institute

Program components: Group leadership/passage workshops, exposure to African-American male leaders and cultural experiences, youth component to Commission for African American Affairs, career development and training projects, individual assessment and monitoring

Program length: Continuous for 18 months

Program setting: Two to four days per week after school at community center

Program staff: One or two group facilitators, occasionally had a program coordinator

Program Enrollment: Averaged 27 youth during the first year and 19 during the second year

Age range: 12–18 (middle- and high-school students)

Overview

Established in 1994, CEA was founded to empower communities and families by providing high-quality, well-managed, innovative services for African-American children, youth, adults, and families. With a \$300,000 two-year grant, CEA's AALI program was developed to increase leadership and social and economic skills of high-risk, urban African-American youth. The program included (1) group leadership/passage workshops, (2) exposure to African-American male leaders and experiences, (3) a youth component to the Commission for African American Affairs, (4) career development and training projects; and (5) individual assessment and monitoring. The program activities were delivered after school two to four days per week. AALI started with one existing staff person to lead the group leadership/passage workshops and provide overall direction for the program, adding a second group facilitator in the fall of 2012. For two short periods during implementation, the AALI program had a program coordinator with responsibility for overseeing recruitment and certain of the program components.

AALI operated over an 18-month period beginning in January 2012 and ending in June 2013. Data for the evaluation—including six quarterly progress reports, seven key informant interviews, and two program observations—were collected for 18 months (January 2012–June 2013) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

AALI initially recruited internally from the pilot project and other existing CEA programs. With a goal of serving 50 youth over the life of the program, CEA wanted to start the program with approximately 15 participants. AALI also held several orientation sessions late in 2011 for interested students and their parents. CEA used a structured intake process to enroll youth in the program and asked each participant to make a six-month commitment to the program. During the first year of the program (January–June 2012), AALI reported having an average of 27 youth

enrolled. At the beginning of the 2012–2013 school year, AALI had a program coordinator who actively conducted outreach to increase enrollment for the second program period. While the program retained many of those who had started in the summer, some youth were involved with football or activities that precluded their involvement during the school year. AALI also lost one of its two van drivers early in the second year, causing transportation issues. For its second year (July 2012–June 2013), the program averaged 19 participants over the course of the year, with enrollment ranging from 30 in December 2012 to ten at the end of the grant period in June 2013 (Table 7).

Table 7. AALI Enrollment and Attendance

	January–June 2012	July 2012–June 2013
Enrollment	27	19
Group mentoring sessions		
Number of sessions	96	133
Average number of participants per session	17	12
Average attendance (%)	63	64

Program Delivery

Group leadership/passage workshops. During the first program year (January–June 2012), AALI held group leadership/passage workshops four times per week with separate workshops for leadership, financial literacy, life skills, and health/wellness, for a total of 96 workshops. Each workshop was guided by lesson plans and materials developed by the group facilitator prior to the start of the program but remained flexible to allow the facilitator to bring up current events, such as elections or natural disasters. The workshops also provided an opportunity for exposure to African-American leaders. An average of 17 youth attended each session, representing 63 percent of the total enrollment (Table 7).

Over the summer of 2012, the schedule was somewhat different, with workshop sessions in the morning and outings in the afternoon. Each week during the summer, the workshops had two days of health/wellness, one culture day, and one day focused on mental activities, such as meditation and mind puzzles. For the 2012–2013 school year, the frequency of the workshops was reduced to three days per week. These were focused on leadership, business, entrepreneurship, finance, life skills, and health/wellness. The two group facilitators met weekly to review the lesson plans and materials and to plan the lectures, interactive activities, and experiential learning opportunities for that week. The leadership workshops typically focused on current and historical figures and integrated critical thinking and decisionmaking scenarios. The business/finance sessions included financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and current events. The health/wellness workshops incorporated life skills, such as etiquette and conflict management, and such topics as hygiene, diet and nutrition, and physical activity. While the workshops were

guided by the overall curriculum and specific lesson plans, the group facilitators maintained flexibility to address current issues, answer questions, and tailor the content to the youth in attendance that day. In March 2013, the frequency was reduced to two weekdays, with a leadership, finance, and entrepreneurial session one day and a life skills, health, and wellness session on the second day. With this change, AALI youth were encouraged to participate in an existing weekend activity called Saturday University that integrated team building, youth development, and mentoring into a basketball clinic. AALI program staff reported average attendance of 12 per session at the 133 group leadership/passage workshops conducted from July 2012 to June 2013, representing 64 percent of those enrolled, somewhat below its target of 80 percent participation (Table 7).

Exposure to African-American male leaders and cultural experiences. AALI program staff used the group leadership passage workshops and other activities as opportunities to expose participating youth to African-American male leaders and cultural experiences. AALI averaged three to eight of these exposures and experiences per quarter. The exposures provided youth with an opportunity to ask questions and interact closely with business owners, entrepreneurs, and other professionals, who spoke to the group about their background and experiences. The group facilitators structured these sessions to allow for personal and direct interaction between the speakers and the youth in attendance. The cultural experiences included outings to movies, sporting events, and readings.

Youth component to Commission for African American Affairs. Through CEA's Commission for African American Affairs, AALI planned to have youth organize and conduct an annual youth summit and participate in quarterly town hall meetings. While all participating youth were expected to play a role in planning the summit, actual participation ranged from four to seven youth at any one time. The first youth summit was expected to take place in the summer of 2012. After AALI lost the program coordinator who had responsibility for the event, it was delayed several times and ultimately did not take place. The Commission's quarterly town hall meetings focused on topics such as education, mental health, economic justice, and criminal justice. While all youth were expected to attend the meetings, program staff reported that only about half did.

Career development/business plan development activities. The career and business plan development component involved career exploration, employment activities, entrepreneurship, and business planning conducted both within the workshops and as separate activities. For the career development portion, the group facilitators focused on integrating information on specific types of jobs, job skills (e.g., resume writing, completing applications, interviewing), and job tours into the overall program. For its entrepreneurship/business plan development efforts, AALI conducted a business plan workshop in the spring of 2012. AALI had planned to have the youth submit the business plans for approval; instead, they had youth work together in groups in the fall of 2012 to create a business, such as selling T-shirts or providing seasonal community work.

Individual assessment and monitoring. During the first year, this program component involved connecting with each youth's school guidance counselors regarding concerns about academics or behavior and gathering report card and attendance information, as well as connecting with parents to address their concerns or questions. For the second program year, AALI restructured the case management piece, assigning each participant to one of the two program staff members, who then had responsibility for tracking the participant, observing and discussing any issues with him, maintaining case notes, and communicating with families as needed.

Progress Toward Goals

CEA had four broad goals for its AALI program and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal.

- **Goal:** To increase participants' self-awareness and personal commitment to positive growth, manhood development, and exemplary character
 - The program enrolled an average of 27 youth during the first year and 19 youth during the second year (target of 50 served over the two years).
 - The program had attendance rates of 63–64 percent at the group leadership sessions (target of 100 percent).
 - School absences ranged from 2.4 to 3.6 absences per month during the 2012–2013 school year (target to have school attendance improve).
 - Youth maintained an average GPA of 2.3 (target that GPA improve by 25 percent).
 - All high-school seniors graduated (target that the percentage of high-school graduates increases).
 - 25-40 percent of family members participated in events each quarter (target to have all families regularly engage).
 - Unable to determine if education and behavioral attitudes improved (target of 20 percent improvement).
- **Goal:** To increase the leadership skills of participants
 - The program exposed youth to between three and eight African-American professionals per quarter.
 - Unable to determine if youth demonstrated leadership skills at home, school, and community.
 - Unable to determine if leadership knowledge or social responsibility awareness increased (target that 80–90 percent of youth increase knowledge).

- **Goal:** To foster youth empowerment, development, collaboration, and cooperation
 - Four to seven youths participated in planning sessions for the youth summit that ultimately did not take place (target of 80 percent participation in planning and 80 percent attendance at event)
 - 50 percent of youth attended town hall meetings (target of 80 percent).
- **Goal:** To increase knowledge and skills in microenterprise development and the importance of social responsibility to their communities
 - 60 percent of youth participated in a business plan development workshop (target that all youth receive the microbusiness plan curriculum).
 - We could not determine if leadership, microenterprise, financial, and entrepreneurial knowledge increased, pending results of a final follow-up survey (target that 85 percent of youth increase knowledge).
 - 57 percent of youth were involved in efforts to obtain worker’s permits and find summer employment (target that all youth participate in job-readiness activities).

With enrollment averaging 19–27 participants over the two-year program period, CEA’s AALI program did not meet its enrollment target of serving 50 youth over the two-year implementation period. About two-thirds of the enrolled youth attended the group leadership workshops and participated in some of the career and entrepreneurial activities, with fewer youth involved in planning the youth summit. CEA planned to collect a variety of indicators of academic progress but was unable to do so consistently. While CEA conducted youth development surveys every six months with all youth involved in its programs, the sample size was too small to determine whether there were changes.

Mother to Son ROP—Small Seeds

Mother to Son Rites of Passage

Program components: Rituals and ceremonies, academic monitoring and support, workshop and exposure activities, community service, physical wellness

Program length: Nine months over two school years (September–May)

Program setting: After school or on weekends at church or community-based locations

Program staff: One staff program director, four staff program facilitators, two contracted drivers

Program enrollment: 35

Age range: 8–15 years

Overview

Small Seeds is a faith-based, nonprofit organization incorporated in 2000 that provides family support services in Allegheny County. Small Seeds' Mother to Son Program Rites of Passage experience (MTSP-ROP) was designed to help African-American males ages eight to 15 develop skills for the transition from childhood to adulthood. It was a subcomponent of Small Seeds' Mother to Son Program (MTSP), which provides support and services for mothers raising African-American males ages eight to 15. With a \$150,000 two-year grant, the MTSP-ROP program was intended to facilitate growth among participants in four domains: individual, academics, community, and physical wellness. For each domain, Small Seeds identified specific criteria as requirements for the youth to progress through four levels. The domains were to be integrated into five planned program components: workshop and exposure activities, rituals and ceremonies, academic monitoring and support, community service, and physical wellness. The program was conducted at four churches in 90-minute sessions biweekly. Program staff included a program director, four program facilitators, and two contracted drivers.

MTSP-ROP was conducted over two school years, the first year running from September 2010 through May 2011 and the second year spanning September 2011 through May 2012. Data for the evaluation—including two quarterly progress reports and three key informant interviews—were collected for the last six months of implementation (January–June 2012) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Participants in the MTSP-ROP were recruited from MTSP and enrolled based on their expressed commitment and maturity level. Program staff reported challenges maintaining enrollment in part because of the high turnover among mothers in MTSP. Because of funding streams, when a mother dropped out of MTSP, her son was no longer able to participate in the program. By the end of the two-year program period, Small Seeds had an enrollment of 35 youth in its MTSP-ROP program.

Program Delivery

To develop an ROP framework for the overall program, staff researched other ROP models and participated in an initial ROP training funded through AAMBTF. While training provided clear definitions of a ROP program, program staff reported difficulty operationalizing a model for its target population of younger boys. In the program's second year, Small Seeds consulted with the program director for NLA's Reaching Back ROP program, who provided feedback on the workshop sessions, age-appropriate ROP rituals and ceremonies, and practical examples of ROP (e.g., jewelry to signify passages to the next phase of the program). With this guidance, program staff felt that they were better able to operationalize a program that more closely followed an authentic ROP model during the second year of implementation.

Workshops and exposure activities. The MTSP-ROP held workshop sessions with four separate groups of youth in four different locations. Each group met biweekly at a church or community-based location. Each workshop session lasted approximately 90 minutes. At the beginning of each school year, program staff outlined the workshop topics for the year, which typically included lectures and discussions that focused on personal identity, African-American history, financial literacy, health and nutrition, or general personal development.

Youth across the four sites also met together one Saturday per month at the Homewood-Brushton YMCA. These monthly workshops allowed for more in-depth coverage of curriculum material and often incorporated exposure activities to help participants achieve requirements for advancement within the program. Exposure activities included a trip to Moraine State Park, a visit to the Black Wax Museum in Baltimore, Md., attendance at the inauguration of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial, and viewings of the movie *Red Tails* and the theatrical production *Through the Night*.

Rituals and ceremonies. Rituals and ceremonies were incorporated into the program during the second year, after program staff received additional training and consultation on age-appropriate activities. For example, during one session, the group facilitator used a "learning and sharing" ritual to focus on the manhood pledge; acknowledge educational successes; and teach youth about the importance of responsibility, showing respect to elders, learning how to receive respect, and performing community service. Also during the second year, Small Seeds began to incorporate ceremonies into retreats and special events to signify participants' progress within the program. For example, youth participated in a physical fitness ceremony after completing the Moraine State Park hiking trail, which tested their endurance and perseverance. At the end of the second year, Small Seeds also held a ceremony to recognize the promotion of four youth to the second level.

Academic monitoring and support. Small Seeds originally planned to provide tutoring for participants needing academic support. However, program staff found that it was not feasible, given the timing and location of the workshop sessions. Instead, program staff focused on tracking grades, discussing academic performance with mothers, and referring youth to academic

support resources when necessary. Monitoring grades also proved to be a challenge because not all youth complied with the requirement that report cards be submitted to program staff.

Community service. Small Seeds organized two community service events during the last six months of its implementation period, including providing meals to individuals experiencing homelessness and partnering up with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity to clean the facilities of Bethel AME Church and Macedonia Church. Out of the 25 youth who regularly participated at that time, 18 (72 percent) attended the community service events.

Physical wellness. Physical wellness activities were conducted in conjunction with the monthly workshops. During these sessions, youth completed various calisthenics and exercises in preparation for passing the physical wellness requirements for passage through the domain. Program staff reported that these sessions provided an opportunity to bond with the youth and model healthy living by participating in the physical activities. During these sessions, staff also taught life skills and reported seeing improvement in self-confidence, strength, and endurance among participants throughout the program year. By the end of the reporting period, 80 percent of youth completed the requirements for the second level, which required them to do five push-ups and ten sit-ups.

Progress Toward Goals

Small Seeds had four broad goals for its MTSP-ROP program corresponding to its four focal domains. While program staff developed specific criteria for moving through the levels within each domain during its second year of implementation, they did not have specific objectives or targets for each goal. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal.

- **Goal:** To clarify participants' understanding of who they are and who they can become as African-American young men
 - By the end of the second year, 72 percent of youth completed the Individual domain requirements for advancement from level 1 to level 2. None of the youth progressed to level 3 or graduated from the program in this area.
- **Goal:** To clarify participants' understanding of their academic capacity
 - By the end of the second year, all youth completed the Academic domain requirements for advancement from level 1 to level 2. None of the youth progressed to level 3 or graduated from the program in this area.
- **Goal:** To encourage participants to demonstrate their role and responsibility in their community

- 80 percent of youth completed the Community domain requirements for advancement from level 1 to level 2. None of the youth progressed to level 3 or graduated from the program in this area.
- **Goal:** To provide participants with opportunities to demonstrate physical fitness
 - 80 percent of youth completed the Physical Wellness domain requirements for advancement from level 1 to level 2. None of the youth progressed to level 3 or graduated from the program in this area.

Small Seeds had 33 youth involved in its MTS-ROP program, which involved working with participants on four domains: individual, academics, community, and physical wellness. Within each domain, Small Seeds had specific criteria as requirements for moving through the four levels of the program. Overall, 72–100 percent of the youth completed the requirements to move from level 1 to level 2 in each of the domain. None of the youth progressed to level 3 or graduated from the program.

New Image ROP—Addison Behavioral Care

New Image Rites of Passage

Program components: Group workshops, writing assignments and journal entries, rituals and ceremonies, exposure activities and field trips, community service and engagement

Program length: Continuous for 16 months

Program setting: After school at church-based community center

Program staff: One staff program supervisor, three staff program facilitators

Program Enrollment: 25 youth

Age range: 11–14 (middle school students)

Overview

Addison Behavioral Care is a community-based agency that provides substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment services to youth and their families residing in the community. With a \$133,731 two-year grant, Addison's The New Image ROP program was designed to provide African-American boys with opportunities to grow in personal and cultural identity. The program supported youth in meeting specific criteria to demonstrate their readiness to progress through the program's three phases (identity, community, education), and included group workshops, individual writing assignments and journal entries, rituals and ceremonies, exposure activities and field trips, and community service and engagement. Addison program staff developed the curriculum and content for the group sessions and other program components based on its research into other ROP programs. The program was coordinated by an Addison program supervisor with three group facilitators, who led the group workshops and organized the other program components.

The New Image ROP program was conducted over a 16-month period starting in December 2010 and ending in June 2012. Data for the evaluation—including two quarterly progress reports and two key informant interviews—were collected for the last six months of implementation (January–June 2012) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

Initially, Addison planned to recruit young athletes through their partnership with the Hill District Midget Football League. However, after three months of heavy recruitment and engagement activities, such as meeting with parents and coaches and attending football games, Addison found that interest for the program was much lower than expected among parents, youth, and coaches. Addison then moved its efforts to Wilkinsburg and partnered with the Wilkinsburg Midget League to recruit youth for ROP program. At this time, Addison lowered its target age range to 9–12 because of some the challenges they had faced recruiting teens. To recruit from the Wilkinsburg League, program staff attended practices and games to familiarize

families with the ROP program and met with coaches and parents to explain the program. Based on these recruitment efforts, 25 youth enrolled in the New Image ROP program, which was below the program's target of 40 participants. While Addison had been approached by parents whose children were not in the Wilkinsburg football league about participating in the program, they limited enrollment to those involved in the football program because of stipulations in their grant proposal.

Program Delivery

Group workshops. The group sessions were typically held weekly after school at Addison's community-based location in Wilkinsburg. For each of the phases, Addison had one of three male program staff coordinate and lead the sessions focused on that area. The group sessions were designed to be interactive and engaging, with group discussions and activities and guest speakers. Each workshop opened and closed with affirmations that provided youth with an opportunity to share thoughts and issues. Program staff held weekly team meetings to discuss the curriculum, issues that arose, and specific behaviors of individual youth. When appropriate, program staff tried to connect the youth with services and supports. As implementation progressed, program staff reported making ongoing adjustments to the content of the group workshops to more accurately reflect an authentic African-centered ROP program. Overall, 19–21 of the 25 enrolled youth were engaged with the program and regularly attended the weekly group sessions and other program components. Despite some transportation issues and barriers related to the football league, program staff felt that the program had interest and commitment from a core group of parents and coaches. Program staff used attendance and participation in the weekly workshops as one marker of readiness to progress to the next phase of the program.

Writing assignments and journal entries. To assess knowledge and understanding of the content of the group workshops and exposure activities, youth completed writing assignments and journal entries. These written exercises were used for self-reflection and to reinforce themes covered in exposure activities and field trips. Each youth was responsible for assembling his journal entries and writing assignments into a Knowledge Portfolio. The Knowledge Portfolios were then used during Griot Circles (an African storytelling or oral history ritual) to help the Council of Elders determine whether criteria had been met for progression to the next phase of the program.

Rituals and ceremonies. The program incorporated ceremonies and rituals to assess participants' knowledge and mark progression through the phases. Overall, about three-quarters of the enrolled youth were involved in Griot Circles and phase-completion ceremonies. For the Griot Circles, Addison involved community members and the league football coaches to serve as Elders. Youth were expected to demonstrate professional behavior with the elders, including making eye contact and firmly shaking hands. Overall, program staff used attendance and participation in the weekly group sessions, performance at the Griot Circle, and the Knowledge

Portfolios as the advancement criteria for the program. For youth who met the criteria for movement to the next phase, a ceremony then marked the progression.

Exposure activities and field trips. To broaden awareness of African-American culture and history among the youth, program staff offered field trips and exposure activities. The three field trips included a five-day tour of national Civil Rights centers and historically black colleges and universities, a viewing of the movie *Red Tails*, and a visit to a local business for job shadowing, with 56–72 percent of the youth attending each field trip. Addison involved coaches and elders in the educational and historical tour to build community capacity so that some of the experiences and learning could be passed along from older generations to the younger. The exposure activities were interactive sessions, such as a Kwanzaa Celebration, Jim Crow Day, mock segregation activities, and a *Brown vs. Board of Education* debate. Addison also featured discussions, films, and guest speakers to illustrate cultural and career exploration themes of the program during the weekly group sessions.

Community service and engagement. To provide structured civic engagement and service opportunities for program participants for the community phase of the program, program staff planned community service and engagement projects for some of the group workshops. For example, youth participated in a community-wide Wilkinsburg cleanup project and a voter registration drive. Youth also completed comparisons of local neighborhoods to explore contemporary issues facing African-American communities. Program staff reported that an average of 74 percent of youth participated in these community services and civic engagement activities.

Progress Toward Goals

Addison had three broad goals for its New Image ROP program and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal.

- **Goal:** To strengthen the African-American and personal identity of participating young men
 - 25 youth enrolled in the program (target of 40).
 - 72 percent of youth met the criteria related to awareness of African-American history and self-realization and progressed through the culture phase as demonstrated through Griot Circles, journal entries, Knowledge Portfolios, and Identity Statements (target of 60 percent).
- **Goal:** To clarify participants' understanding of their role and responsibility through community service and civic engagement, and to provide opportunities for community services and civic engagement

- 74 percent of youth participated in the community service and engagement activities (target of 60 percent).
- **Goal:** To provide participants with opportunities to explore career and academic opportunities and to expose participants to experiences that will give them a broader understanding of the factors that affect education today
 - 84 percent of youth demonstrated their awareness of the historical and societal contexts that effect education among African-Americans by completing writing assignments and other activities (target of 60 percent).
 - 72 percent of youth visited two postsecondary schools and two trade schools and completed individualized career goal plans (target of 60 percent).

Addison enrolled 25 youth in the New Image ROP program, falling short of its target enrollment of 40. Addison had specific criteria for meeting the requirements of each of the three phases of the program. Overall, about three-quarters of youth met the requirements for passages through the identity phase, the community phase, and the education phase.

R.E.A.C.H. Rites of Passage

Program components: Group instructional sessions, group workshops/exposure activities, and ceremonies and rituals

Program length: Nine-month program over two years (September–May)

Program setting: School building, during school day

Program staff: One program director, two program coordinators

Program enrollment: 49 in the 2011–2012 school year, 23 in the 2012–2013 school year

Age range: Grades 3–5 (ages 8–11)

Overview

Established in 1999, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Charter School (ULGPCS) is a public charter school serving approximately 230 students in kindergarten to fifth grade. With a \$60,000 two-year grant, ULGPCS' R.E.A.C.H. (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Character and Humility) program focused on the identity, gender and character development of African-American males using the Nguzo Saba principles to help students develop a deeper sense of self, a connection with the broader community, and an awareness of African-American culture. The program components included group instructional sessions, group workshops/exposure activities, and ceremonies and rituals. ULGPCS' R.E.A.C.H. Program was conducted over two school years (2011–2012 and 2012–2013).

Data for the evaluation—including five quarterly progress reports and eight key informant interviews—were collected for 18 months (January 2012–June 2013) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

ULGPCS recruited participants for its R.E.A.C.H. program internally from school professional staff and families. For the 2011–2012 program year, staff reported a total of 49 youth in first through fifth grades. The following year, ULGPCS re-evaluated the program and its goals, deciding to narrow the target population to third- to fifth-graders. Program staff felt that working with the older youth would allow them to better integrate ROP principles (e.g., identity, transitions). Further, due to a change in available leadership staff, the Urban League limited the number of eligible participants to 25 students for the 2012–2013 school year to help maintain a high level of engagement and individualized attention. For the 2012–2013 school year, ULGPCS reported a total of 23 youth (21 returning, two new), falling just short of its target enrollment of 25 (Table 8).

Table 8. Urban League Enrollment and Attendance

	July 2011–June 2012	July 2012–Aug. 2013
Enrollment	49	23
Number of sessions	41	68
Average number of participants per session	39	20
Average attendance (%)	79	92

Program Delivery

The overall R.E.A.C.H. program was structured around three thematic phases: (1) identity and character, (2) cultural awareness, and (3) unity and community. Within each phase, program staff incorporated a series of extended projects, culminating in a celebration and awarding of symbols linked to the Kente cloth. In addition, ULGPCS worked to integrate the Nguzo Saba principles throughout the program’s different components: cooperative economics, or *ujamaa* (e.g., business ventures); self-determination, or *kujichagulia* (e.g., cultural research project, field trip to freedom center/underground railroad museum); collective work and responsibility, or *ujima* (e.g., camping, community service projects); and creativity, or *kuumba* (e.g., drumming, photojournalism, pottery).

For the 2011–2012 school year, five ULGPCS staff members managed the program. However, by the end of the 2012–2013 school year, the program had dropped to three program staff, and only one had been with the program initially. At this point, program staff included one program director and two program coordinators, all of whom worked at the school as administrators, teachers, or support staff.

Overall, the program director and program coordinators had difficulties with design and implementation of the program during the 2011–2012 school year. Specific logistical challenges noted by staff were the need for dedicated space to conduct R.E.A.C.H. activities, larger blocks of time to get through the complexities of the material, transportation to enable participants to attend events outside of school time, and strategies to address student behavior issues. ULGPCS also recognized the lack of African-American male staff at ULGPCS and the need to tailor existing ROP program models to be developmentally appropriate for elementary school students as implementation challenges. To address these issues, ULGPCS sought additional support from other ROP grantees that resulted in a revised program with a more developmentally appropriate ROP focus. Completion of each phase of the program was marked by a ceremony during which students received beads as recognition for their transition.

Group instructional sessions. Program staff and community volunteers met with students twice a week for 45 minutes during the first period of school. The sessions included activities such as drumming, African-American history research projects, and business venture projects. For example, during the 2012–2013 school, ULGPCS brought in experts in African drumming from the community to conduct a six-week drumming module. During the sessions, the youth

learned traditional African rhythms, drum songs, and some of the stories and principles associated with the rhythms. The module culminated with 23 youth performing drumming demonstrations during the Kwanzaa celebration and at the end-of-year banquet. With the business venture component, ULGPCS supported youth in developing a business plan for a specific product that included target audience, marketing strategies, and the cost and price of the product. Students chose a charity to receive the proceeds from their business venture fundraising project. For the research projects, ULGPCS divided the students into six teams, assigning each to an African-American history topic (e.g., Black Panthers, World War I, Tuskegee Airmen, and Harlem Renaissance). After researching the topic and developing a presentation, each team presented to the entire school at the morning assembly. Overall, the group instructional sessions had excellent attendance, averaging 79 percent the first year and 92 percent the second year.

Group workshops/exposure activities. Group workshops/exposure activities were planned to occur during weekday meetings or during bimonthly Saturday meetings. These activities included weekly pottery classes at the Union Project; field trips to the From Slavery to Freedom exhibit at the Heinz History Center and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio; and family activities, such as a Soul Food Luncheon where youth and their families shared a meal and participated in a reenactment of the television show *Chopped*.

Ceremonies and rituals. ULGPCS planned this program component as the core of the ROP experience, to be integrated into the weekly sessions and exposure activities. Each weekly session opened with all youth reciting the ROP program pledge, which they had written at the outset of the program. To celebrate accomplishments achieved in each of the three phases of the program and to recognize participants' progression into the next phase of the program, ULGPCS held recognition ceremonies where program staff presented youth with beads for a bracelet (e.g., wealth bead) to signify completion of a phase or a significant project. Passage from one phase to the next was based on active participation in the activities and projects. As a final ceremony marking the end of the program, ULGPCS organized a banquet that featured most of the different aspects of the program, including a drumming session, a dance demonstration, a pottery display, a sale of the T-shirts produced from the business venture project, and a display of the history research projects. As recognition of their progression through the phases, the fifth-grade boys received a tablet computer, the fourth-grade boys received an e-reader, and the third-grade boys received gift bags.

Progress Toward Goals

ULGPCS had four broad goals for its R.E.A.C.H. ROP program and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each during its second year of implementation. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal during the 2012-2013 school year.

- **Goal:** To implement a school-based ROP program that targets building self-identity, character, and a sense of unity and community in African-American males

- 21 youth enrolled in the program (target of 25).
- Average attendance for the workshops and activities was 79 percent the first year and 92 the second year (target of 100 percent).
- **Goal:** To encourage parental involvement in R.E.A.C.H.
 - 90 percent of parents participated in at least one activity (target of 80 percent).
- **Goal:** To foster participants' development of identity and cultural awareness through various projects and activities
 - 100 percent of participants completed their African-American history research project (target that 80 percent demonstrate knowledge of the impact that African-Americans had on various periods in history).
 - 90 percent of youth participated in six-week drumming sessions (target that 95 percent of participants will demonstrate their knowledge of several types of drum beats, knowledge of drum terminology, and the culture of African Drumming).
 - 86 percent of youth participated in pottery classes (target that 95 percent of participants will participate in making pottery and learning about African symbols).
- **Goal:** To foster the development of character through a connection with the broader community, to connect to the broader community through an understanding of business ventures, and to affect their community through charitable giving
 - 100 percent of youth presented a business plan (target 95 percent).
 - 100 percent of youth completed this phase and received a wealth bead as recognition (target 80 percent).
 - 100 percent of students participated in the business venture project and fundraising drive (target 90 percent).

ULGPCS enrolled 49 youth the first year and 23 youth the second year in its R.E.A.C.H. program, which focused on three domains: identity and character, cultural awareness, and unity and community. During both years of the program, ULGPCS maintained a strong participation rate, with average attendance at 79 percent in the first year and 92 percent in the second year. After narrowing the target population of their program from first through fifth grade to third through fifth grade and adjusting their program goals to better address the developmental skill level of their students, ULGPCS met the overall goals of its ROP program and successfully implemented several changes that allowed the program to stay on schedule and improve the focus of the activities.

Reaching Back ROP—Neighborhood Learning Alliance

Reaching Back Rites of Passage

Program components: Group mentoring sessions, academic monitoring and support, manhood training, art and cultural experiences, health, ceremonies and rituals, community engagement, retreats, adult learning institute

Program length: Five years

Program setting: Classroom after school at one local school, Saturdays at community-based location, learning institute at Sankofa Village for the Arts

Program staff: One program director, one lead facilitator/leader, community elders, adult volunteer mentors (numbers of elders and mentors fluctuates throughout program)

Program Enrollment: 29 youth for the 2013–2014 program year, 27 for the 2014–2015 program year

Age range: 14–18 (high-school students) and adult men (leadership institute)

Overview

The Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA) was established in 2003 by several longstanding community-based organizations to provide quality after-school programming in lower-income neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh. NLA collaborates with community partners to improve academic performance for low-income African-American children. With an initial \$150,000 two-year grant, NLA's Reaching Back Rites of Passage (ROP) program was based on the Community LEARNS program to provide a mentoring-based, academic-focused ROP program, rooted in the Nguzo Saba principles, for African-American boys in high school. In 2013, NLA was awarded a second grant of \$250,000 to continue implementing the Reaching Back core youth program and to develop and implement the Sankofa Leadership Institute for African-American men in the community seeking to improve their ability to work with African-American male youth.

The Reaching Back program focused on growth in four domains: individual, academic, community, and physical. Within each domain, NLA specified requirements for the youth to progress through four levels. The overall program included group mentoring sessions, academic monitoring and support through an existing tutoring program and life coach sessions, manhood training integrated into the group sessions, art and cultural experiences, health, ceremonies and rituals, community engagement through tutoring of boys in local middle and elementary schools, and retreats. NLA contracted with one program leader to coordinate and lead all program components. In addition, the program leader worked with another facilitator and community volunteer mentors to deliver the youth program. The program leader also worked with two facilitators to deliver the adult leadership institute. NLA also formed a joint Council of Elders with Bethany House Academy to provide guidance on the overall program and more formally integrate the ROP principles into the program.

The first phase of the Reaching Back program was conducted over three school years (2010–2011, 2011–2012, and 2012–2013). The second phase of the Reaching Back program, including the addition of the Sankofa Leadership Institute, spanned a two-year period from September 2013 to June 2015. Data for the evaluation—including 17 quarterly progress reports, 11 key informant interviews, and five program observations—were collected for 48 months covering the last half of phase one of the program (January 2012–June 2013) and all of phase two (January 2013–June 2015), and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

For the 2011–2012 program year, NLA recruited youth from the student body at the Pittsburgh Milliones University Preparatory School (University Prep), a sixth–12th-grade magnet school located in Pittsburgh’s Hill District. NLA’s recruitment efforts at the school included attending school assemblies and individually reaching out to interested students and families. NLA came very close to meeting its goal of enrolling 30 high-school students, with a total of 29 participating. For the 2012–2013 program year, NLA reached out to more than 100 youth through a series of in-school recruitment efforts and assemblies. Because of these recruitment efforts, NLA recruited 33 high-school students, including 16 new students, exceeding their goal of 30. For the 2013–2014 program year, NLA again recruited 29 high-school students, just shy of its goal of 30 (Table 9). For the 2014–2015 program year, NLA recruited 27 high-school students and 78 adults (average of 26 per cohort).

Table 9. NLA Enrollment and Attendance

	July 2011– June 2012	July 2012– August 2013	July 2013– August 2014	July 2014– August 2015*
Youth enrollment	29	33	29	27
Group mentoring sessions				
Number of sessions	NR	63	56	42
Average number of participants per session		13	22	12
Average attendance rate (%)	36	38	72	52
Adult enrollment				78
Weekly meetings				
Number of sessions	NA	NA	NA	18
Average number of participants per session	NA	NA	NA	19
Average attendance rate (%)	NA	NA	NA	71

* Adult enrollment based on October 2014–June 2015 data only

Program Delivery

From the beginning, most of the Reaching Back program activities were held at University Prep every Monday and Thursday from 3–6 p.m. during the school year, as well as on periodic Saturdays. During the summer months, program leaders continued to meet with students during Saturday sessions at the Thelma Lovette YMCA. Although NLA came close to or met its enrollment goal of 30 high-school youth each year, program staff struggled to maintain consistent and high levels of participation in the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years (see Table 9). Program staff reported that it was challenging to balance the wide range of program activities with the youths' other extracurricular activities and responsibilities. As a result, NLA refocused the overall program model for the 2012–2013 program year on those objectives most critical to an ROP model. Starting in January 2013, program staff organized more-intensive activities by having youth engage in projects that required focused application of core skills, as well as longer-range planning and collaboration. Although average attendance across the different program activities was only 38 percent for the 2012–2013 program year, NLA experienced a significant increase in consistent attendance for the 2013–2014 program year, averaging 72 percent for weekly sessions. However, this increase in attendance dropped somewhat in the 2014–2015 program year, averaging 52 percent for weekly sessions. The Sankofa leadership program for adults averaged 71 percent attendance for weekly sessions for that year.

Mentoring sessions. For the weekly mentoring sessions, each mentor was assigned to work with several of the participating youth. Before being assigned to specific youth, the mentors had a two-week orientation designed to help them start building relationships and developing skills, as well as to ensure that they could make the necessary time and emotional commitment to the program. For the prior two school years (2011–2013), 20 mentors went through the orientation period and 15 committed to serving as active mentors for the program. An average of three mentors attended each session. Although the number of adults who consistently attended decreased during the 2013–2014 school year, NLA had 15 mentors who participated during the year in sessions, workouts, and retreats, along with providing individual mentoring. Mentoring continued for the 2014–2015 program year, although participation rates of adult mentors were not reported.

The mentoring sessions typically began with a Manhood Circle, during which the youth recited a Manhood Pledge and had the opportunity to share an accomplishment before the group facilitators introduced the topic of the day. The session then transitioned to a group discussion, followed by a video or activity to illustrate the topic, a group meal, and a workout session. The activities changed weekly to incorporate the manhood, arts and cultural experiences, and health aspects of the overall ROP program. The program coordinators and mentors facilitated the group discussion but had the time and flexibility for one-on-one interactions as well. The sessions provided the opportunity for mentors and Council of Elder members to acknowledge accomplishments, share experiences, and discuss overcoming challenges. Based on program

observations, there appeared to be a high level of enthusiasm, engagement, and ownership of the program by mentors, program coordinators, and youth. The adults had a good rapport with the youth and the youth appeared to be comfortable sharing personal information with the group.

At the end of both the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 program years, NLA added another layer of mentoring to the program, pairing high-school and elementary-school students for after-school tutoring and activities. Each year, NLA built toward the mentoring of elementary-school youth to ensure that the high-school youth were prepared to accept the responsibility of being a mentor. The high-school youth went through a mentoring orientation and contract process similar to that of the adult mentors before being matched with an elementary-school mentee. During the 2013–2014 program year, 12 high-school students (41 percent) provided ongoing mentoring and tutoring to 20 African-American males in kindergarten through fifth grade. During the 2014–2015 program year, 11 high school students (41 percent) provided ongoing mentoring and tutoring to 29 African-American males in kindergarten through fifth grade .

Academic support. Throughout the program, coordinators held meetings with youth, teachers, and administrators during the school day. Initially, these meetings were held during two weekly hourlong time slots. However, because the youths had variable schedules and time conflicts, coordinators often worked around those obstacles to provide support. The meetings typically involved discussion of the students' academic progress, academic assistance, and the development of individual education plans. The program coordinators also utilized the services provided by the Community LEARNS program to provide tutoring when needed. During the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years, program leaders continued to meet with students during school hours to review academic progress and areas for improvement. During the 2014–2015 school year, the program coordinators increased the emphasis on academic support, offering SAT preparation and individualized academic plans for youth.

Manhood training. As planned, the program coordinators integrated manhood training into the mentoring sessions and field trips at least once a week for two hours. This involved discussion and exposure activities related to the concept of manhood and what it means to be a man. For example, the mentors and Council of Elders took turns at one mentoring session sharing their experiences and journeys transitioning from boyhood to manhood, including romantic relationships, fatherhood, motivation for success, professional development, involvement in gang activity, domestic violence, and racism. At certain points, youth asked questions and shared their own experiences.

Arts and cultural experiences. Originally, NLA had planned to have the youth develop a social awareness campaign using a variety of media to create positive images of black males that would be displayed throughout the school and at public spaces, such as libraries. Since this group approach did not fit well with the individual interests of participating youth, program staff shifted course during the 2012–2013 program year, deciding to capitalize on the talents of some of the program coordinators and mentors who were professional artists and musicians. NLA provided youth the opportunity to focus on an art or cultural activity of their choosing (e.g.,

music, drumming, poetry, visual arts, media arts). By allowing the youth to select their preferred outlet, the program staff hoped to foster interest and develop skill in an area of interest for each participant. However, only drumming was included for the 2013–2014 school year. This component did not continue for the 2014–2015 program year.

Health. The program coordinators required all youth to set individual goals as a way to mark growth and accomplishment in the areas of health and physical fitness. Workout sessions were incorporated into the weekly sessions with activities such as running, push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and strength training. Initially, the workouts were structured around having youth complete certain minimum criteria or race against one another. However, due to the wide range of athletic skill, the workout sessions were restructured to allow participants to focus on individual goals and assess progress toward meeting them. During the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years, program staff held weekly workout sessions at the Thelma Lovette YMCA. More than three-quarters of the students completed their physical activity requirements.

Ceremonies and rituals. From 2011 to 2013, NLA held two ceremonies each year: a promotional Unity dinner in December and an end-of-year ceremonial retreat. At the end of the 2012–2013 program year, NLA also organized a trip to Ghana as the final transitional ritual for youth who met the criteria for Level 4, graduated from the program, and were approved by the Council of Elders. During the 2013–2014 school year, NLA held two retreats, one awards luncheon, one family dinner, and one on-site recognition ceremony.

During the 2012–2013 program year, NLA reported that 12 participants (41 percent) completed the criteria for promotion to level 2 and eight (28 percent) were promoted to level 3. For the 2013–2014 program year, NLA reported that 12 (36 percent) completed the criteria for promotion to level 2, six (18 percent) were promoted to level 3, and seven (21 percent) were promoted to level 4 and attended the Ghana trip as the final transition ritual. For the 2014–2015 program year, NLA reported that 17 participants (63 percent) completed the criteria for promotion to level 2, 19 (70 percent) were promoted to level 3, and ten (37 percent) were promoted to level 4. NLA did not offer the opportunity to travel to Ghana during the 2014–2015 program year. While the original goal of the program was to have 90 percent of youth transition to level 4, program staff felt this goal may have been unrealistic, given the amount of personal growth that youth must demonstrate to meet the requirements.

Sankofa Leadership Institute. The Sankofa Leadership Institute was intended to be added during the 2013–2014 program year. This new component was designed to develop a concentration of black adult leaders in Pittsburgh. The Leadership Institute targeted all providers, educators, and administrators who offer programming to African-American males or youth and who seek to infuse their programs with greater elements of identity/character development and leadership training. All participants of the Learning Institute underwent training in culturally responsive mentoring frameworks and approaches using the Sankofa Institute Model. NLA had proposed to enroll 25 trainees (e.g., educators, service providers, program developers) in the first year and 50 for the second year (for a total of 75 over the two-year grant period). However, NLA

used the 2013–2014 program year as a planning period, focusing heavily on developing the curriculum, goals, and indicators of success for the program, as well as on recruiting participants. The Sankofa Leadership Institute conducted a pilot of the adult program during summer 2014 and officially launched in September 2014 with its first cohort of 35 men (with the expectation that 27–30 would remain engaged because of attendance requirements and attrition). In line with their proposal, NLA engaged a second cohort of 26 men in January 2015 and a third cohort of 17 men in April 2015. NLA used the weekly sessions to discuss a range of topics relating to both the men themselves and how to effectively work with African-American boys (e.g., identity as an African-American man, leadership, messaging to the community, the connection between physical health, trauma exposure, and behavioral experiences). NLA also hosted monthly workshops that supplemented the weekly sessions with the men. Finally, NLA worked with participants to develop implementation plans that they could take with them and use in their current work with youth.

Progress Toward Goals

NLA’s Reaching Back ROP program had four broad goal areas (individual, academic, community services, health) with specific promotion criteria to levels 2 (Scholar), 3 (Warrior), and 4 (Warrior-King) within each goal area. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2014–2015 program year. Instead of traditional targets for each outcome within a goal (e.g., GPA, grade promotion, participation in community service project), NLA had target criteria for each level transition for each domain goal.

- **Individual Goal:** To increase youth understanding of who they are and what they should be doing as African-American men
 - 37 percent of youth successfully completed the required objectives for passage to a higher ROP level (target that 100 percent of participants complete leadership level 1 by the end of the program; that 90 percent of participants complete leadership level 2 by the end of the program; that 70 percent of participants progress to at least leadership level 3 by the end of the program; that 50 percent of participants complete leadership level 4 by the end of the program).
- **Academic Goal:** To increase youth understanding of who they are and what they should be doing as African-American scholars
 - 76 percent completed academic requirements for 2014–2015.
 - 77 percent of youth had GPAs over 2.0, down from 95 percent in the prior year (2013–2014), with an average GPA for the year of 2.5, down from 2.9 in the prior year (target 100 percent have minimum of 2.5 GPA).
 - 100 percent were promoted to the next grade level or were on track to graduate (on par with 100 percent in 2013–2014).

- 75 percent of high-school seniors completed college admission testing and applications (compared with 66 percent in 2013–2014) and 75 percent applied to college.
- **Community Service Goal:** To increase participants’ understanding of who they are and what they should be doing as African-American community members
 - 41 percent completed community service requirements for 2014–2015.
 - 60 percent of youth participated in a community service project (down from 53 percent in 2013–2014 and 72 percent in 2012–2013).
- **Physical Goal:** To increase youth understanding of who they are and what they should be doing physically as African-American men to improve their physical fitness
 - 88 percent completed physical activity requirements (up from 79 percent in 2013–2014, 73 percent in 2011–2012, and 72 percent in 2012–2013).
- **Mentoring:** To support high-school participants in providing ongoing mentoring and tutoring for African-American males in grades kindergarten through five to improve their school performance
 - 41 percent of high-school students participated in mentoring the elementary-school students in chess (up from 32 percent in 2013–2014).
 - 29 elementary students participated in mentoring activities (chess) during the 2014–2015 program year (up from 20 in 2013–2014).
- **Sankofa Leadership Institute:** To implement a Leadership Training Institute for African American adult males
 - NLA successfully implemented the adult program and enrolled 78 men in total (target of 26 per cohort).

Over the last three program years (2012–2013, 2013–2014, 2014–2015) NLA continued to implement and evaluate the youth component of the Reaching Back program, which provides a mentoring-based, academic-focused, ROP program to African-American boys in high school. On average, the program enrolled and maintained 30 youth each year (in line with of their target of 30) who attended weekly after-school sessions during the school year and met with program staff on Saturdays for workout sessions and informal mentoring. Overall, participation rates across all of the various components were moderate, with an average attendance of 54 percent.

One of the primary goals of the program was for students to challenge themselves and achieve success in each of the domains of influence (individual, academic, community, physical fitness). By the end of the program year, ten students (37 percent) met criteria for promotion across all domains and were preparing to transition up one level in the ROP aspect of the program. While this percentage is low, the domains in which participants were expected to

succeed require a high level of growth and may not occur all at the same time or during a single academic year. This is a primary challenge of the ROP programs. Across the domains, NLA demonstrated progress for some of the goals. NLA maintained high levels of achievement in the physical fitness domain, with 88 percent of students completing physical activity requirements (up from 79 percent in 2013–2014). For the academic goals, NLA experienced a drop in the percentage of students who met the minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 (from 95 percent to 77 percent) and the group received an average GPA of 2.5 (down from 2.9 the prior program year). However, all participants were promoted to the next grade level or graduated from high school. Despite the success rate of graduation or promotion, the mismatch with low average GPA is problematic because it will likely perpetuate ongoing and future issues related to postsecondary academic achievement, success in the workplace, and potentially ongoing fiscal challenges.

Building on the first phase of the Reaching Back program, NLA added an adult leadership component, referred to as the Sankofa Leadership Institute, starting in the fall of 2014. Although it took time to establish a rapport with the adult participants and there were challenges to working around their schedules, NLA experienced a large amount of success with the implementation of this new component. With an average attendance of more than 70 percent and the development of implementation plans for all participants, there is potential for NLA to have a widespread influence on youth throughout the community via these initial adult cohorts.

Sankofa P.O.W.E.R.—Bethany House Academy

Sankofa P.O.W.E.R.

Program components: Group workshops/exposure activities, ceremonies and rituals, community engagement, academic monitoring and support

Program length: All year

Program setting: After school and weekends at community-based location

Program staff: One staff program director, volunteer community members

Program enrollment: 35 youth for the 2013–2014 program year, 98 for the 2014–2015 program year

Age range: 9–17

Overview

Bethany House Academy (BHA) is a community-based nonprofit that serves mainly high-risk and African-American children, youth, and families. Receiving a \$150,000 grant in 2010, BHA implemented the Sankofa P.O.W.E.R. (Positive Outcomes with Excuses Removed) program, which was designed to provide an African-centered ROP program for youth ages 9–17, focused on facilitating growth in purpose and identity as an American-African individual. BHA designed the program to address seven transformative domains of focus (courage, endurance, family, school, peers, community, and technology) with four program components (group workshops/exposure activities, ceremonies and rituals, community engagement, and academic support). In 2012, BHA received an \$80,000 grant to continue its program. In 2013, BHA received a new grant for \$175,000 to create the Healthy Village Learning Institute, designed to provide an authentic African-centered holistic Manhood-Womanhood training program through weekly meetings, individual mentoring, cultural enrichment, and recreational activities that target African-American males and females between the ages of 13 and 21. BHA's executive director provides leadership for the program, working with community volunteers who serve as the Council of Elders, community mothers and fathers, and other program leaders for the female group.

Combined, Sankofa P.O.W.E.R. and the Healthy Village Learning Institute were conducted over five school years (2010–2011 through 2014–2015), but this report will focus on the new grant period for the Healthy Village Learning Institute, which began in July 2013. Data for the evaluation—including six quarterly progress reports, seven key informant interviews, and two program observations—were collected for 18 months (January 2014–June 2015) and are summarized below.

Recruitment/Enrollment

BHA recruited youth for the program from the Northview Heights and McKeesport communities using flyers that described the program and solicited participation and were

distributed to schools, churches, and community agencies and organizations. For the 2013–2014 program year, there were two recruitment and enrollment periods, one during the school year and the other during the summer. Some youth participate in both the school and summer sessions. By the end of the 2013–2014 program year, BHA had enrolled a total of 35 youth in the program (20 males, 15 females). For the 2014–2015 program year, BHA had enrolled 98 youth (35 males, 63 females), well exceeding their total enrollment goal to serve 50 youth by the end of the two-year grant period. Youth represent McKeesport, Duquesne, Clairton, and some Pittsburgh communities.

Contrary to prior years, BHA maintained consistent and high levels of participation during 2013–2014 with an average participation rate of 81 percent for the 35 youth and during 2014–2015 with an average participation rate of 70 percent attendance for the 98 youth (see Table 10). For 2013–2014, BHA program staff reported that the smaller group sessions, which create a more-supportive environment with fewer youth participating, resulted in all initiates becoming more vocal and confident in expressing their thoughts and ideas. Although sessions were larger for the 2014–2015 year, BHA reported that program staff continued to work on establishing rapport with youth, which aided engagement during the sessions.

Table 10. BHA Enrollment and Attendance

	July 2011– June 2012	July 2012– August 2013	July 2013– August 2014	July 2014– August 2015
Enrollment	25	45	35	98
Workshops and exposure activities				
Number of sessions	NR	90 (45 per location)	33	42 (21 for males, 21 for females)
Average number of participants per session	NR	13	12	29
Average attendance rate (%)	36	41	81	70

Program Delivery

BHA organized its program through seven transformative domains (courage, endurance, family, school, peers, community, and technology) and four program components, then built in markers of progress and transitions through various stages of achievement and personal growth (levels 1 through 4), with level 4 marking the final level and graduation from the program. In addition to facilitating the weekly workshops (i.e., Solution Series), the executive director and program leaders organized and conducted the ceremonies and rituals, provided group and individual mentoring, and coordinated the community engagement and exposure activities. However, the program director deliberately moved away from an emphasis on level transitions to focusing more on individual activities or lessons. This change to the framework of the program was not explicitly outlined in the grant proposal.

For the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 program years, the program met weekly for four hours with most of the program activities held at the cultural center in McKeesport. Starting in April 2014, BHA opened a new location in McKeesport (replacing the original cultural center) that serves as the hub for the Healthy Village Learning Institute. BHA reported that this space allows for greater exploration and application of African-centered work, consisting of spaces dedicated solely to African artifacts, storytelling, and personal exploration (e.g., youth get to decorate and organize themes in their own gender-specific space). Although used by the program, this center is open to the community. During the 2014–2015 program year, BHA hosted several community events, including the Black Berets and community discussions around race and youth.

To support all aspects of the program, BHA formed a Council of Elders (in collaboration with NLA) comprising community volunteers who provided youth mentoring and participated in the weekly workshops. In addition, as part of the Healthy Village model, BHA proposed to engage more community members as part of the program. During the 2013–2014 program year, BHA engaged more than 145 community mothers/community fathers/elders participating in the Healthy Village Learning Initiative. During the 2014–2015 program year, they engaged more than 300 elders. Across both program years, BHA hosted a variety of events to engage community members, including open houses, health and wellness sessions, and antiviolenence events. While these community activities or events serve to engage the community and promote “health” among its leaders, it is unclear how all of these events directly relate to the manhood-womanhood development that is the focus of the youth program.

Group workshops and exposure activities. The weekly group workshops, also referred to as Solution Series, and exposure activities were structured to highlight African and African-American history, culture, and current issues. The workshops were facilitated by the program director, program leaders, elders, or other special guests. Youth typically participated in group discussion and activities, such as martial arts demonstrations, videos or movies of African-centered issues, or drumming, in addition to completing African-centered research assignments. The workshops were used as opportunities to discuss the themes related to the seven domains and demonstrate mastery of requirements within the domain area for passage to the next level. BHA focused specifically on the individual domain during this grant period, noting the need to address this identity area before being able to move forward into the other domains (e.g., community, peers, academics). In addition to the weekly workshops, BHA periodically held retreats, exposure activities, and cultural and community engagement events with the youth from both the male and female groups.

Ceremonies and rituals. As planned, BHA incorporated rituals and ceremonies in the weekly sessions to foster a sense of identity within the program. The rituals included rites that corresponded to each of the transformative domain, such as the Rite of Endurance and the Rite of Courage. The rites typically involved youth completing assignments that were task-driven and physically and mentally challenging. In prior years, youth participated in ceremonies that

celebrated their passage through levels 1 through 3. However, the ceremonies and rituals were used more recently to mark achievements in each domain.

Mentoring. The Jegnoch (program leaders) and the Council of Elders provided mentoring during the weekly workshops. The program leaders typically initiated a conversation with one youth, discussing a problem area (e.g., school attitudes or relationship with parents) and provided guidance on this issue in the group setting. The program director also delivered one-on-one mentoring on an as-needed basis to discuss specific issues confronted by youth in their daily lives (e.g., academic issues, family issues, exposure to violence). This often occurred outside of the weekly sessions and included phone calls to the youth, his family, and other key adults. The program director felt that the one-on-one mentoring allowed him to stay strongly connected to youth and provide an individualized approach to the program. However, this also hindered the ability to assess participation and progress in a consistent way across all participants.

Community engagement. BHA incorporated community service as a requirement for the program. During the 2013–2014 program year, 94 percent of students completed the community service charge; 88 percent completed the charge during the 2014–2015 program year, which included participating in at least three community service events during the year. The youth roles in these events included welcoming community members, doing direct door-to-door petitioning to increase awareness of the event, and participating in the service project.

Academic monitoring and support. BHA attempted to monitor academic progress and develop education plans for participating youth but experienced ongoing challenges in collecting report cards from participants. Youth participated in educational exposure activities that included visits to local colleges (University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania State University, Slippery Rock, Clarion, Youngstown State, and Edinboro) and participation in Duquesne University’s weeklong summer school. In addition, youth completed a Scholar Statement and Charge, which served to elaborate on their identities as African-American students and scholars.

Progress Toward Goals

BHA had six broad goals for its Sankofa P.O.W.E.R. ROP and the Healthy Village Learning Institute program and developed specific objectives to assess progress for each. Here, we present each goal and the metrics for assessing progress toward that goal for the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 program years.

- **Individual Goal:** To articulate what it is to be an African in America and personal standards for each participant’s role and responsibilities as an African in America
 - 80 percent of youth completed the individual and critical thinking charge in 2013–2014 and 93 percent in 2014–2015 (target of 100 percent).
 - An average of 77 percent correctly completed the 7 C’s of empathy (care, curiosity, courage, center, commitment, creativity, confidence) and the Virtues of Ma’at (ancient Egyptian concept of truth, balance, order, law, morality, and justice)

- in 2013–2014; 54 percent did so in 2014–2015, with 99 percent of that number completing the activities during the last quarter of 2014–2015 (target of 100 percent).
- 86 percent of youth completed the minimum three out of ten principles of Initiatory Mastery activities in 2013–2014; 95 percent did in 2014–2015 (based on demonstration to Jegnochs).
- **Family Goal:** To develop expectations for behavior in the home and demonstrate compliance with home chore and behavior plans
 - This goal was only assessed for the 2014–2015 program year: 100 percent of youth completed at least three out of seven principles of Family Engagement activities (target 80 percent).
 - **Academic Goal:** To develop expectations and strategies to improve overall academic and behavioral performance and to articulate a positive orientation toward capacity as a scholar
 - 100 percent of youth completed a Scholar Statement and Charge for the final quarter of the school year in both 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 program years (target of 75 percent).
 - 51 percent of youth had a GPA of 2.5 or greater during the 2013–2014 program year, whereas 72 percent of youth had a GPA of 2.5 or greater during the 2014–2015 program year (target of 50 percent).
 - 66 percent of youth had a school attendance rate of 90 percent or higher in 2013–2014, whereas 92 percent did in 2014–2015 (target of 75 percent).
 - 94 percent were promoted to the next grade level or graduated in the 2013–2014 school year; that number was 100 percent for the 2014–2015 school year (target 100 percent).
 - **Peer Goal:** To articulate an understanding and acceptance of one’s role as an advocate and how positive behavior can be a positive influence among peers, as well as to participate in opportunities for leadership development, training, and implementation
 - 100 percent of youth completed the peer agency charge in 2013–2014, 98 percent did in 2014–2015 (target of 75 percent).
 - 100 percent of youth engaged in opportunities for leadership development, training, and implementation in both 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 (target of 100 percent).
 - 97 percent of youth had no suspension records in 2013–2014, 85 percent in 2014–2015 (target of 90 percent).
 - 97 percent of youth were not involved in the juvenile justice system in 2013–2014, 100 percent in 2014–2015 (target of 100 percent).

- **Community Goal:** To develop personal expectations for improving one’s community and demonstrate commitment to community service and engagement
 - 94 percent of youth completed a community service charge in 2013–2014; 88 percent did in 2014–2015 (target of 80 percent).
 - 94 percent of youth participated in three community service activities/events during 2013–2014 year, 97 percent did during the 2014–2015 year (target of 80 percent).
- **Technology Goal:** To demonstrate the ability to verify facts using Internet and computing skills
 - 89 percent of youth completed all African-centered assignments in 2013–2014 and 100 percent in 2014–2015 (target of 90 percent). On average, each youth completed four African-centered assignments per year.

BHA built upon its prior ROP program in creating the Healthy Village Learning Institute, designed to provide an authentic African-centered holistic Manhood-Womanhood training program through weekly meetings, individual mentoring, cultural enrichment, and recreational activities that target African-American males and females between the ages of 13 and 21. In 2014, BHA acquired a new building in McKeesport to host all program sessions and serve as a convening location for all involved community members. Participation rates were strong for both males and females, with an average of 81 and 70 percent attendance for the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 program years, respectively.

Overall, BHA met many of its program goals for both the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 program years, either maintaining strong performance or demonstrating improvements across most domains. Specifically, the program exceeded targets for at least one indicator for the academic, peer, and community domains, and met its target for the technology domain. However, BHA fell short in meeting its two goals for the individual domain. While this may be the more difficult domain for youth to conquer, it was also the primary focus of the program this year. Although not explicitly part of the predetermined goals of the program, BHA established a strong and positive presence for the Healthy Village Learning Institute within the community, helping to ensure the sustainability of the initiative in the near future. BHA has obtained preliminary funding to continue engaging youth in the community for a new program year in 2015-2016.