



## **My Brother's Keeper: How Commerce has Created Pathways to Success in the Workforce for our Nation's Youth**



In 2014, President Obama launched the [My Brother's Keeper \(MBK\)](#) initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential.

Through this initiative, the Administration has partnered with cities, towns, businesses, and foundations to connect young people to mentoring opportunities and support networks, and help them get the skills they need to find a good job or go to college and

work their way into the middle class.

The [U.S. Department of Commerce](#) understands that an investment in America's youth is also an investment in the country's economic future and collective prosperity. For the first time ever, the Commerce Department has made job-driven training a top priority and created the "Skills for Business" initiative, an effort to better collaborate with private sector, academic, economic development, and government leaders at all levels to prepare workers with the skills needed to fill 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs.

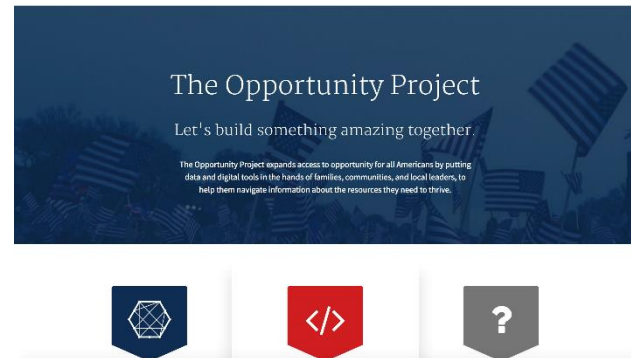
This report highlights the programs and initiatives of seven Commerce agencies that have expanded opportunities and created pathways to success in the workforce for young people, including boys and young men of color in America.





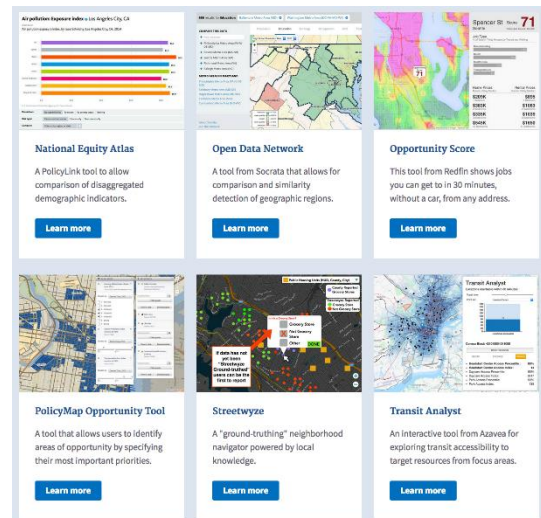
## U.S. Census Bureau

[The Opportunity Project](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau puts data and tools in the hands of civic leaders, community organizations, and families to help them navigate information about critical resources such as jobs, housing, transportation, schools, and other neighborhood amenities. This project focuses on unleashing the power of data to help our children and the next generation access the resources they need to thrive.



The private sector utilized the data and tools provided by the Opportunity Project to support educational and skills goals in line with those of MBK, although these projects are not sponsored by the Federal government. Such private sector efforts include:

1. [GreatSchools](#) released the “Opportunity Badge” that identifies high-performing schools based on the average income of the neighborhood and shows how schools provide access to opportunity, broken down by race and ethnicity, to help all parents make the best decisions possible for their children.
2. [diversity.data.kids.org](#) released the “[How Affordable is Opportunity? Tool](#)” that reveals racial and ethnic inequities in the “cost” of neighborhood opportunity for children, through narrative story maps and interactive mapping and data tools for use by policymakers, advocacy organizations, and the media.
3. [#YesWeCode](#) works with 100 tech equity focused community-based organizations across the nation to integrate Opportunity Project data into their tech skill training curriculum. They are also committed to developing a community of practice amongst 20-50 community college partners around curriculum integration of Opportunity Project data during their National Convening of Community Colleges in the fall of 2016.



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## Economic Development Administration

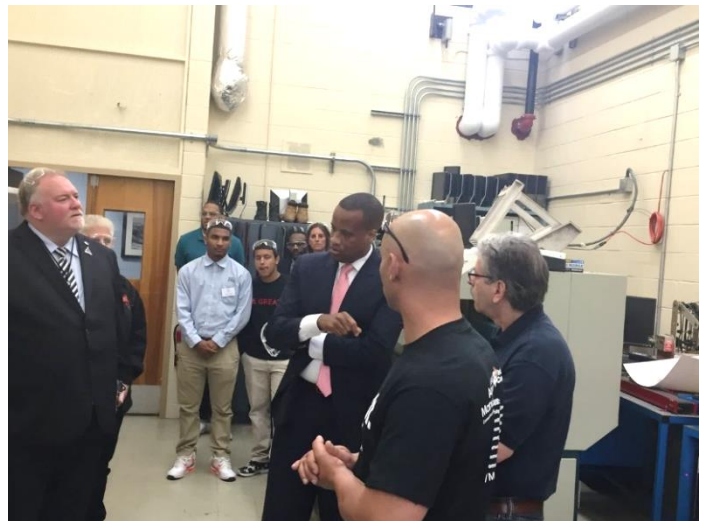


As the only Federal government agency focused exclusively on economic development, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) plays a critical role in fostering regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation. Through strategic investments that foster job creation and attract private investment, EDA supports development in economically distressed areas of the United

States.

EDA recognizes that young people in these economically distressed communities are often faced with a number of challenges. When MBK was launched, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Jay Williams was designated as the MBK ambassador for the Department of Commerce. In this role, he has encouraged and supported youth investment in communities across the country.

Having grown up in Youngstown, Ohio, an economically distressed community, he personally understands the long-lasting impact of investing in youth from these types of communities. As an MBK ambassador, Assistant Secretary Williams focuses on expanding opportunities for boys and young men of color through engagements with [MBK Communities](#).



Since 2014, Assistant Secretary Williams has participated in number of professional development events with young people including resume workshops and webinar discussions. In June 2016, he invited young men from the Hartford, Connecticut Boys and Girls Club's Passport to Manhood Program to join him on a manufacturing center tour to expose them to the manufacturing field as a part of the [Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership \(IMCP\)](#). Later that month, Assistant Secretary Williams delivered the commencement address to the graduating class of Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, a high-performing Title I school in Washington, D.C.





Within EDA, Assistant Secretary Williams has made youth investment a priority. As a part of a [2017 Federal Funding Opportunity](#), EDA has included economic development initiatives that help unemployed and underemployed young adults obtain the skills and knowledge for success as a part of EDA's underserved communities investment priority.

### **Minority Business Development Agency**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's projections, by 2044, white Americans will no longer be the majority racial group in the United States. For the United States to remain a leader in the global economy, minority-owned businesses need the capital and capacity to become economic engines for their community and the nation.



The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) understands the economic impact associated with the shift in demographics so MBDA staff has participated in events promoting and advocating for economic empowerment, via entrepreneurship, with the millennial generation. The events and strategic alliances below were opportunities for MBDA to stress the importance of creating the optimal environment where businesses owned and operated by millennials will begin and thrive.

- Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship incentives via newly funded MBDA Business Centers that started a five-year award cycle on April 1, 2016.
- Collaboration with the Department of Commerce's Office of Civil Rights to share MBDA Youth Entrepreneurship grant opportunities, in support of the MBK Initiative with Minority Serving Institutions and the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Participation in Business Sunday events at local churches promoting programs and resources available in support of the MBK initiative.
- Speaking engagements at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in support of this initiative.
- Participation and support of Operation HOPE and its programs targeted at youth entrepreneurship.

Understanding the importance of educating and equipping the next generation of minority business owners with the skills and resources required to operate a profitable business, MBDA is working to form a public-private partnership providing training to businesses, owned or created by minorities between the ages of 16-35, and technical support to foster entrepreneurship and business innovation. The goal of this initiative is to increase entrepreneurs within America's millennial generation.



MBDA's objective is to identify minorities in the millennial generation that reside in underserved and disenfranchised communities who demonstrate the aptitude, creativity, and interest in creating new businesses that economically and socially benefit their respective communities or communities of interest. These kinds of activities and services have a positive impact, both socially and economically, on the participants, their communities, and the American economy.

### National Institute of Standards and Technology

The mission of National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is to promote U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve our quality of life. NIST's mission statement does not specifically include education; however, the bureau is able to leverage the strengths of excellent technical staff to support STEM workforce pipeline programs and limited education outreach activities. NIST's STEM pipeline programs, as well as the bureau's outreach efforts, emphasize direct linkages with their scientists and engineers. The STEM education programs are all-inclusive, but focus on those populations that are typically considered under-represented in STEM, including boys and young men of color.

Our programs supporting the STEM education pipeline include:

- The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program is designed to inspire undergraduate students to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) through a unique research experience that supports the NIST mission. Accepted students carry out assigned research projects with a NIST mentor during 11-week fellowships at NIST campuses. Students apply through their respective universities, and grants for student support are awarded through the student's university. Information on this program and how to apply is found at <http://www.nist.gov/surf/>.
- The NIST Graduate Student Measurement Science and Engineering (GMSE) fellowship program provides doctoral-level graduate students with opportunities and financial assistance to obtain laboratory experience within the NIST laboratories in the STEM disciplines related to NIST measurement science and engineering research. The program provides full scholarships for graduate school tuition and allows the student to participate in NIST research during internship periods. The program is administered through a grant with the National Physical Science Consortium (NPSC). Additional information on this program is found at [www.nist.gov/iaao/gmse.cfm](http://www.nist.gov/iaao/gmse.cfm).
- To assist teachers with ideas and teaching tools for middle school students, NIST holds an annual two-week, hands-on workshop for middle school science teachers. There are 22 positions available for the annual workshop, normally held in July, and selection



emphasis is put on teachers from high needs schools. Information on the program is found at <http://www.nist.gov/iaao/teachlearn/>.

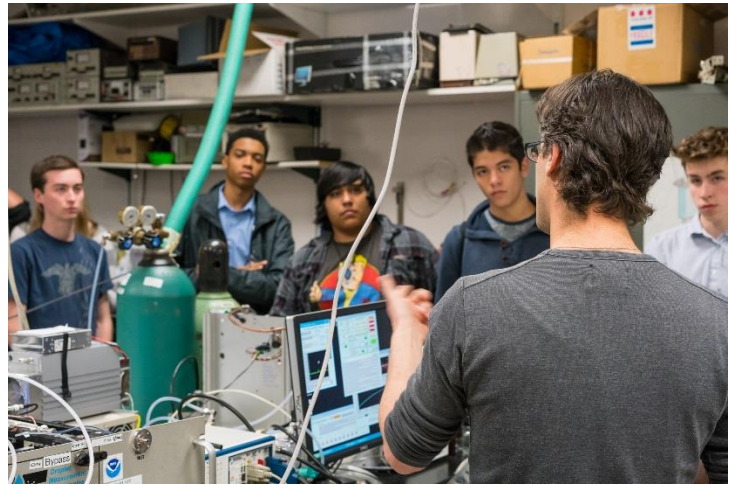
- The NIST NRC Postdoctoral Research Associateship Program provides two-year temporary appointments for outstanding scientists and engineers. Awardees are chosen through a national competition administered by the National Academies/NRC, and research opportunities are available at all the NIST campuses. The postdoctoral program brings research scientists and engineers of unusual promise and ability to perform advanced research related to the NIST mission, introduces the latest university research results and techniques to NIST scientific programs, strengthens mutual communication with university researchers, shares NIST unique research facilities with the U.S. scientific and engineering communities, and provides a valuable mechanism for the transfer of research results from NIST to the scientific and engineering communities. Additional information can be found at <http://www.nist.gov/iaao/postdoc.cfm>.

NIST's education outreach activities are aimed at undergraduate students and post graduate, and include outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). NIST also performs outreach and presentations at career fairs and events targeting specific underrepresented populations in STEM (*e.g.* the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, NOBCChE, and the National Society of Black Physicists), as well as personal outreach through specific visits by NIST staff to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and at events emphasizing under-represented populations in STEM.



### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Education offers the Educational Partnership Program. The goal of this program is to take students from underrepresented communities, and educate and graduate them in NOAA-specific STEM disciplines so they may enter the workforce in fields that directly support NOAA's mission. The Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) is aimed at increasing programs and



opportunities for individuals to pursue applied research and education in atmospheric, oceanic, and environmental sciences and remote sensing technology, in support of NOAA's mission. There is a scholarship program which provides NOAA internships and one-on-one mentoring to aid in the increase of the number of these students graduating with degrees in fields integral to NOAA's mission. Each scholar receives up to \$35,000 for two academic years to cover the costs of actual tuition and fees and other allowable expenses. This is an annual program that has been around for since 2000.

In March 2016, NOAA joined other federal agencies in opening their science and technology labs to students as a participant in the MBK National Day at the Lab. From Florida to Hawaii, 12 NOAA facilities nationwide hosted dozens of youth who had the opportunity to meet and interact with NOAA scientists. While there, the students had a first-hand experience in performing various research activities and learned directly from the scientists about the work that they do on a daily basis. Student were also given the opportunity to ask questions and see real life laboratories. The excitement that the kids exhibited was matched by NOAA scientists who were thrilled to showcase their work to this eager audience. Students and employees alike had a good time and a meaningful experience. NOAA hopes to make this an annual event.





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### National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Funded through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) [Broadband Technology Opportunities Program](#) (BTOP) invested \$4 billion in 230 projects across the country from 2009-2010. These projects built critical broadband network infrastructure, opened or expanded public computer centers, and established broadband adoption and digital inclusion programs.

By September 30, 2010, NTIA funded 66 [Public Computer Center](#) (PCC) projects, totaling \$201 million in federal grant funds, to provide access to broadband, computer equipment, computer training, job training, and educational resources to the public and vulnerable populations. NTIA also funded 44 [Sustainable Broadband Adoption](#) (SBA) projects during that same period, totaling nearly \$251 million in federal grant funds, to support innovative projects that promote broadband adoption, especially among vulnerable population groups where broadband technology traditionally has been underutilized.

From 2010-2013, PCC and SBA grantees in communities across the country reached out to people who may never have used a computer — a group that includes a disproportionate number of low-income Americans, senior citizens and minorities — and taught them how to use a mouse, navigate the Internet and set up an email account. PCC grantees established or improved 3,000 computer centers in recreation centers and housing projects to provide free Internet service for those who lacked access at home. PCC and SBA grantees also taught citizens how to write resumes, find Internet job postings and even apply for jobs over the Internet—helping overcome the perception in some communities that Internet access is not relevant to their daily lives. Other grantees helped teachers learn how to use broadband technology in their classrooms and adapt their curriculum to help prepare their students for the digital age, and taught job-seekers digital literacy skills that helped them get back to work.

Although the PCC and SBA grants officially ended in 2013, NTIA funded public computer infrastructure and capacity within these organizations, many of which continued to work with vulnerable populations, including young men of color, beyond the end of the grant. For example, the City of Philadelphia continues to provide access to computers and training for low-income residents.

Armed with lessons learned and best practices from these grant programs, NTIA launched its [BroadbandUSA](#) program in January 2015, to help communities expand their broadband capacity, adoption, and use. BroadbandUSA offers technical assistance, guidance, and resources to communities across the country seeking to expand local broadband deployment and adoption. BroadbandUSA's technical assistance team has provided support to various communities, including cities that are developing digital inclusion plans, many of which have elements that



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target young men of color. For instance, BroadbandUSA is supporting the efforts of several cities, on both the East and West Coasts, to design broadband adoption programs and digital inclusion strategies focused on workforce development, public housing and low-income residents.

### United States Patent and Trademark Office

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has participated in a number of efforts which have shown great success in furthering the mission of the MBK initiative. These initiatives include:

- Engaging with students in Alexandria, Virginia, at the Cora Kelly School through the [R.E.S.E.T. program](#) and one-on-one work with students that take part in the Jefferson-Houston School Education Experience. USPTO employees volunteer to work with the entire third and fourth grade classes 4-6 times a year doing hands-on STEM and Intellectual Property activities.
- Working with the [Patriots Technology Training Center](#) that focuses on increasing the number of fifth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students entering STEM fields.
- The USPTO Office of Education and Outreach also conducted workshops and activities at the Black Engineer of the Year Awards STEM Carnival and the National Society of Black Engineers Convention in 2016 which featured many young men of color from various public schools.
- For the last several years, USPTO has participated in the annual Washington, DC area YMCA Thingamajig Convention, a STEM festival where young people design and create their own inventions.



- In June 2015, a team of USPTO employees attended the [UNCF-Merck Science Initiative Fellowship Program](#) Orientation in Philadelphia. The program provides scholarships and fellowships to participants that include the undergraduate research scholarship award, graduate research dissertation fellowship award, and doctoral science research fellowship award. The USPTO then hosted a two-hour panel discussion session which was designed to provide guidance on how to leverage advanced degrees in STEM-related fields to drive innovation through intellectual property and pursue career opportunities not only in academia as researchers but also as practitioners – particularly at the USPTO.



- In September 2015, a team of USPTO employees attended the [HBCU Week Conference](#) in support of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, which featured Vice President Joe Biden as the keynote speaker. The USPTO was asked to participate in a panel discussion on the “Status of HBCU STEM Research and Development Performance and Trends in Federal Investments in STEM, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship.”

The Department of Commerce is committed to expanding opportunity for all Americans towards a more prosperous and progressive economy. Our economy is stronger today, because our communities are stronger. As evident from the work of these Commerce bureaus, the agency is providing America’s next generation with the tools and resources they need to succeed and compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Commerce joins MBK communities across the country in reflecting and celebrating the historic progress made through the MBK initiative. To learn more about the MBK initiative and the measurable difference it has made in the lives of young people across the country, visit <https://www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper>.