



# Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys



2007 Annual Report

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## STATE OF FLORIDA

**BILL MCCOLLUM**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Congratulations to the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys for completing its first annual report. The Council is charged with studying and proposing measures to alleviate and correct the conditions negatively affecting Black men and boys in Florida. Created by Senator Wilson with the help of Representative Peterman, and led this year by Chairman Levi Williams, the Council spent countless hours traveling around Florida hearing from concerned citizens about the many issues facing Black men and boys in this state. The tremendous public participation underscores the importance of the Council's work and the recommendations contained in this report.

With the Council's second year of existence already underway, I hope that this year, the Council continues to address the issues negatively affecting Black men and boys with a particular focus on criminal justice and prevention programs. Additionally, I am looking forward to the Council's continued research and recommendations supporting re-entry programs for ex-offenders.

The Council's findings and recommendations are important to the entire Florida community. We are all impacted when any segment of the population struggles with health issues, lacks educational and employment opportunities, or suffers disproportionately from crime and other socioeconomic ills. I urge all Floridians to read this groundbreaking report and work with your legislators, educators and community leaders to resolve the issues brought to light by the Council.

I commend the Council for its work and pledge to do what I can as Attorney General to help implement the Council's recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill McCollum".

Bill McCollum

## **Message from Chairman Levi Williams Jr., Esq.**

The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys respectfully presents the 2007 Annual Report to Governor Charlie Crist, the Florida Legislature, Attorney General Bill McCollum, and the citizens of Florida. This inaugural report is the work product of many caring and committed individuals from every corner of the State of Florida.

The Council thanks Representative Frank Peterman and Senator Frederica Wilson for conceptualizing the Council and fighting to establish its existence through the law. The Council also thanks Attorney General Bill McCollum who activated the Council and chaired its first meeting on February 27, 2007.

The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys represents the State of Florida amongst ten other such state Councils across the United States of America: California, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, South Carolina, Washington and Wisconsin. The 19 members of this Council, the Attorney General's staff assigned to the Council and the Council's many specially designated community participants, worked diligently and with innovative fervor to make this inaugural report meaningful and useful to all who are interested in making a difference in the lives of Black men and boys in Florida.

As you study the findings and recommendations of the Council in this report, bear in mind that its content represents hope for a better tomorrow on three levels:

1. The data presented serves to educate many about facts and issues that are otherwise sought out and/or presented to only a few.
2. This report will serve as the launching pad for future studies, measurable outcomes, and innovative recommendations to create a paradigm shift in the lives of all Floridians, not only those targeted by this Council, Black men and boys.
3. The Council has already built a very concerned and active constituency throughout the state who are dedicated to working with their national, state and locally elected officials and community leadership to initiate the recommendations made in this report to make all communities of Florida economically viable, educationally strong, healthy, meaningfully participatory in their governance and experiencing material increases in their "quality of life."

The members of the Council know the magnitude of the tasks that we have been asked to take on, but we also know that working together, anything is possible. Individually, we are but a single drop contributing to the roaring river of change. I thank all of the Council members for their commitment and dedication to the mission and vision of the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. Additionally, I especially recognize the incredible efforts of the Committee Chairs, without whom this report would not be possible: (1) Dr. Billy Close - Educational Outcomes; (2) Christopher Norwood (Vice Chair)

- Foster Care and Family Outcomes; (3) Rep. Frank Peterman-Legislative and Criminal Justice Outcomes; (4) Dr. Eddy Regnier-Health and Mental Health Outcomes; (5) Economic Outcomes (initially Chaired by Rep. Jennifer Carroll). It was not easy to fit twelve months of work into nine months of time. I especially acknowledge the efforts of our specially designated community participants listed herein. These individuals and/or entities not only participated in the Council's programs, but played an integral part in the data and recommendations presented in this report. Finally, but not least, I would like to thank Attorney General Bill McCollum and his staff for the many hours they dedicated to making sure that the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys was successfully launched and had a successful publication of its *2007 Annual Report*.

I am hopeful that in 2008, the Council will accomplish three primary actions:

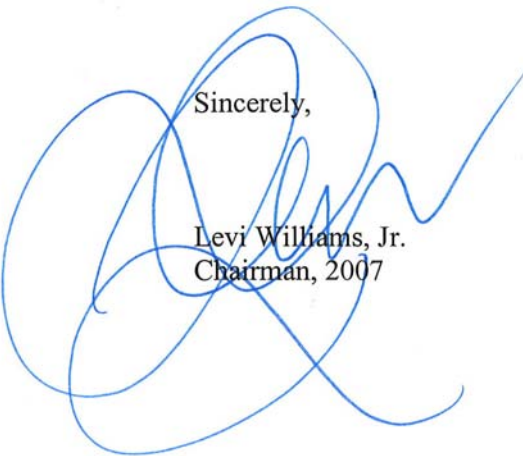
1. The creation and establishment of at least one local Council in each of Florida's sixty-seven (67) counties. This will help to facilitate the Council's business and serve as a communication network for education, recommendations and implementation of outcomes.
2. The passage of Senator Frederica Wilson's proposed budget for the Council. There is much work yet to be done, and without fair and adequate funding, the State's commitment to the mission and vision of this Council may remain incomplete.
3. The members of the Council have taken the steps necessary for consideration as a perpetual commission. Again, Senator Frederica Wilson is leading the charge with proposed legislation to make this Council a permanent commission. I encourage Florida's legislative leadership to support and pass Senator Wilson's bill, as the alternative will result in the termination of this critical work by 2011. There is much too much to do for that to happen.

In closing, it has truly been my honor to serve as the 2007 Chairman of the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. I have learned much more than originally imagined, cried more than anticipated, yet celebrated many successes with an eye towards a better tomorrow. Together, we will be a "roaring river of change" for all Floridians and I can say to you that together, the "Sunshine State" will illuminate the way for the rest of the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Levi Williams, Jr.  
Chairman, 2007



## COUNCIL BACKGROUND

Inspired by efforts in other states, Senator Frederica Wilson, with the help of Representative Frank Peterman, led the charge to create a statewide council to address socioeconomic and other factors affecting the lives of Black men and boys in Florida. In 2006, the Florida Legislature established The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys. The Council is charged with studying the conditions affecting Black men and boys, including, but not limited to, homicide rates, arrest and incarceration rates, poverty, violence, drug abuse, death rates, disparate annual income levels, health issues, and school performance. The Council's goal is to propose measures to alleviate and correct the underlying causes of these conditions. The measures may consist of changes to the law or systematic changes that can be implemented without legislative action.

The Council is administratively located in the Office of the Attorney General, and has 19 members from the legislature, governmental agencies, public and private organizations and private citizens. Established in section 16.615, Florida Statutes, the Council is required to submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives and chairpersons of the standing committees of jurisdiction in each chamber.

The Council held its inaugural meeting on February 27, 2007. The appointed members or their designees discussed issues and elected officers. The Council elected Levi Williams as Chair and Christopher Norwood as Vice Chair. Attorney General Bill McCollum presided over the meeting and articulated his desire for effective recommendations to be presented for gubernatorial and legislative consideration. He discussed with the Council members some of the issues challenging young Black males and urged the Council to:

1. Research and/or identify valid and applicable research on the issues to be addressed by the Council to support its ultimate recommendations;
2. Narrow the scope of targeted issues to insure manageable success;
3. Prioritize the targeted issues for legislative action and commitment of resources to ensure the most immediate and identifiable outcomes;
4. Set short and long-term goals for the operation of the Council's business; and
5. Include in the Council's recommendations elements to validate support for re-entry programs for ex-offenders and prevention programs.

Besides regular teleconferences, the Council convened the following meetings throughout the state.

- February 27, 2007: The Capitol, Tallahassee
- May 30, 2007: National Conference on Preventing Crime in the Black Community, Orlando
- August 30, 2007: North Campus of Broward Community College, Coconut Creek
- November 9, 2007: Police Athletic League, Jacksonville
- December 18, 2007: The Capitol, Tallahassee

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Black Males and Black-on-Black Crime: An Overview**

For its inaugural report, the Florida Legislature charged the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys with investigating the factors causing the continuing crisis of Black-on-Black crime. This report is designed to address the statutory charge and provide a foundation upon which the Council and the Florida stakeholders can conduct future research and derive additional and more expansion recommendations for change.

Black-on-Black crime is an on-going crisis. Nearly 30 years ago, in August 1979, Ebony magazine published a special issue on “Black on Black Crime: The Causes, The Consequences and the Cures.” Publisher John H. Johnson asserted that the basic premise of the special issue was that Black-on-Black crime had reached such a critical level that it threatened the very existence of Blacks as a people. High rates of Black-on-Black homicide, unemployment, delinquency rates among Black youth, and disproportionate rates of adult incarceration and community unrest, led the publisher to remark that “as in the 19th century, there is no flesh in America, as Frederick Douglass said...as cheap as Black flesh.” Noting that the facts and figures cited in the article had nothing at all to do with the “social characteristics” of Black people who he argued have never been more criminal than other groups, Johnson argued that Blacks are simply more often exposed to environments that have produced higher levels of social frustration and social disorder in all groups. Johnson concluded by dedicating the special issue to what he described as the “overwhelming majority of Blacks, who are victims, not perpetrators of Black on Black Crime...and primarily to the perpetrators of crime whom he described as more often than not, victims of their own crimes and of a society that condemns them to lives of frustration and rage and emptiness.”

Johnson’s appeal to the words of Frederick Douglass to clarify the relationship between Blackness and criminality, are important for understanding the context and implications of Black-on-Black crime, then and now. The intellectual debates and scholarly writings of Douglass and the noted social scholar and political historian W.E.B. Dubois are also frequently drawn upon to explain the relationship between Blackness and criminality, and the economic, social and political implications of “Black criminality.”

Murder may swagger, theft may rule and prostitution may flourish and the nation gives but spasmodic, intermittent and lukewarm attention. But let the murderer be Black or the thief brown or the violator of womanhood have a drop of Negro blood, and the righteousness of the indignation sweeps the world. Nor would this fact make the indignation less justifiable did not we all know that it was Blackness that was condemned and not crime. (W.E.B. Dubois)

Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society, is an organized conspiracy to

oppress...and degrade [it], neither persons or property will ever be safe . . . .  
(Frederick Douglass)

The research presented in this report highlights some of the issues that are conducive to alleviating Black-on-Black crime, and the recommendations made by the Council are designed to alleviate the frequency and intensity of Black-on-Black crime.

This report includes innovative and thoughtful findings from the Council's five committees: Improving Economic Outcomes, Improving Educational Outcomes, Improving Foster Care and Families, Improving Health Outcomes and Legislative Review. As a result of the Council's charge to investigate the factors "causing black-on-black crime from the perspective of public health related to mental health, other health issues, cultural disconnection, and cultural identity trauma," (Section 16.615(8)(b), Florida Statutes) the Council worked diligently to release the recommendations located throughout this report. As the committees addressed such varied topics, the best way to summarize all the findings was through the "Top 15 Recommendations" listed below.

## **Top 15 Council Recommendations**

### **Economics**

1. Analyze the participation rates of Black-owned firms and the dollar amounts awarded through bidding and/or direct contracting with state agencies. In conjunction with the Office of Supplier Diversity, identify those products and/or service codes where minority business enterprises, especially Black-owned firms, are under-represented. Inform the Black business community as to the product and/or service codes that are in need of more Black business participation.
2. In consultation with other entities such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and the Florida Minority Supplier Development Council, develop an assessment tool to identify business capacities, strengths and/or weaknesses. This assessment tool should be utilized to: a) Determine award capacity; b) Create business development programming for the contracted business; c) Project capacity increases during multi-year contracts, including potential renewals; and d) Identify a corporate industry peer success coach to be a resource to Black business participants.
3. Encourage and support opportunities for joint-ventures between and among Black-owned businesses, to increase contract performance capacities, shared costs and increased outcomes. Support community resources such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and Who's Who, developed by Pam and Jerome Hutchinson. Also, continue to work with the Office of Supplier Diversity, to continuously highlight and publish an online directory of all minority business enterprises including Black-owned businesses by product and service codes. Moreover, the Council will work to ensure the online business directory is accessible to all state and municipal purchasing entities as a resource.



## **Education**

4. Review the statewide and district level policies, procedures and outcomes of school discipline throughout Florida. Require all public and charter schools to collect student disciplinary data, including teacher/SRO referral rates, suspension rates and grade distributions (along with rationale and outcomes) for all K-12 teachers and staff. Data must be disaggregated by race, gender, violation, and punishment. Create a reporting tool to track incidents and compare punishments. Require training of all principals, teachers and SRO officers on school disciplinary procedures.
5. The Department of Education, School Superintendents and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) staff should partner to evaluate, amend and/or rescind K-12 zero tolerance policies and practices to eliminate the referral of youth to DJJ for misdemeanor offenses.
6. Identify intervention programs with proven records of success working with Black Males, such as Role Models of Excellence. Beginning in 2008, establish 5,000 Role Models of Excellence programs in every county within the state with the goal of having a Role Models of Excellence Program in every school by 2012. Develop peer mentoring and other special intervention programs such as the Young Black Male Discovery Project programs for Black males in all elementary, middle and high schools.

## **Foster Care and Adoption**

7. Require school districts to implement Kinship Care Support Programs. Non-relative care givers should receive cash benefits for caring for a dependent child. Encourage friends of parents or god parents to care for their loved ones.
8. Community based care (CBC) agencies serving foster youth should offer weekly Independent Living skills (IL) classes to all current and former foster youth age 13 to 23, as well as transportation for the youth to enable them to attend the classes. They should also offer weekly IL skills classes at all facilities to ensure that institutionalized youth receive the same training.
9. Promote adoption through “One Church, One Child” (OCOC). “One Church, One Child” of Florida needs to be restored to recruiting, preparing and approving families for children in foster care in need of adoption service. Appropriately and adequately funding OCOC will allow the agency to work along side the resolution of key barriers to placements of children, i.e. access to the children to know who they are and preparation of children for adoption.

## **Health**

10. The state should invest in a public education campaign to promote the benefits of early screening for health care. This should include use of mass media, dissemination of information in public and private schools as well as non-traditional systems such as mobile medical units.

**Legislative Review**

11. Appropriate \$250,000 for the Council for fiscal year 2008-09, including the hiring of an Executive Director (FTE with full benefits).
12. Eliminate the Council's sunset date by passing Senate Bill 546. The Council should also be made a permanent commission.
13. Establish at least one local Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys in each of Florida's sixty-seven counties, to serve as a network for communication, education and action.
14. Reestablish the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force (Governor Bush's original task force sunsetted in January 2007).
15. Support the study and recommendations of the Department of Juvenile Justice's Blueprint Commission.

# ECONOMICS

*“It is clear that Florida has placed a high priority on minority business advocacy and outreach. Moving forward, we must continue to make the Black community aware of the numerous opportunities in state government and continue to improve business and economic opportunities across the state.”*

***Torey Alston, Council Member***

## **Committee on Improving Economic Outcomes**

**Mr. Levi Williams – Chair**

Mr. Torey Alston

Mr. Christopher Norwood

Rev. Dr. Albert Simpson

## ECONOMICS

The Council gave the Committee on Improving Economic Outcomes the following duties:

- a. Defining poverty;
- b. Systematic disparity study of annual incomes;
- c. Developing and implementing a means to secure input on associated issues from the Legislature; governmental agencies; public and private organizations and private citizens;
- d. Identifying barriers to entry into high-paying professions;
- e. Identifying the role finances/poverty plays in cultural identity trauma and cultural impact (including, but not limited to, family, education and community involvement);
- f. Identifying elements associated with those Black men and boys who have been economically successful;
- g. Issue findings, conclusions and recommendations for Council consideration; and
- h. Such other charges that the Council and/or the Committee may identify.

In support of the Council's charge, the Economic Committee investigated the area of Black wealth. The Economic Committee defined "Black wealth" as that which consists of: Increasing economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, high wages, home ownership, educational advancement, and good health.

With this working definition, the Council's Economic Committee collected and interpreted various studies from governmental organizations and researchers in the private sector.

### Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is at the heart of every community's ability to generate wealth. The ability to generate recurring and exponentially increasing income, outside of one's salary, is critical to the development of individual and community wealth. Entrepreneurial efforts combined with buying power should create wealth in the Black community.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau data from "Black-Owned Firms: 2002," Black-owned businesses generated \$88.6 billion (0.394 percent of the total revenues generated by all firms nationally) in revenues in 2002. This is a 24 percent increase in revenues generated by Black-owned business from 1997. This revenue increase was generated by 1.2 million Black-owned firms in 2002, a 45 percent increase since 1997, and represents a total of 5 percent of all non-farm business in the United States. Interestingly, only 10,716 (less than one percent) of the recorded 2002 Black-owned firms with receipts of \$1 million or more represented approximately 55 percent of the total receipts generated by Black-owned firms in 2002 or approximately \$49 billion. **Less than one percent of all the Black-owned businesses in the United States are responsible for 55 percent of the total revenues generated, nationally, by Black-owned**

**businesses.** The same report found that Florida had a total of 1,539,207 firms, for all sectors, generating a total of \$1,075,802,198,000. Further, Black firms represent 102,053 (7.1 percent), of the total of Florida firms, generating receipts of \$5,721,314,000 (0.535 percent). **The 2002 Census indicates that Blacks make up 15.5 percent of Florida's total population, yet the Black-owned businesses only generate one-half of one percent of Florida's total firm receipts.** While the total revenues of Black-owned firms in Florida are slightly higher than the national average, the revenue is below expectation when considering the total population of Blacks in the state of Florida and their collective or aggregate buying power.

In order to put the data presented above into perspective, it is important to consider the buying power of Black communities in both the state and nation. The Selig Center for Economic Growth at the Terry College of Business for the University of Georgia issued a study on this in its Third Quarter 2006 edition titled "The Multicultural Economy 2006." It predicted Black buying power in 2006 for the state of Florida to be \$52.7 billion. Nationally, it predicted that Blacks would be the largest minority market and "...energize the U.S. consumer market as never before." To support this claim, the Selig Center reported that "the nation's Black buying power [would] rise from \$318 billion in 1990 to \$590 billion in 2000, to \$799 billion in 2006, to \$1.1 trillion in 2011." This national increase represents a 237 percent increase in buying power over a 22 year period of time.

The total reported revenues of Black-owned business in Florida as reported above is only 10.8 percent of the total Black buying power in the state of Florida. In order for meaningful economic growth within the Black community to occur, Black consumers must diligently seek out Black vendors for their consumables. The increased circulation of dollars within the Black community before it leaves the community will create increased economic viability among its businesses and foster economic growth.

The U.S. Census captured data for Hispanic or Latino-owned firms. Nationally, 1,573,464 Hispanic-owned firms generated receipts of about \$221,997,425,000, almost 60 percent more than that of Black-owned firms. In the state of Florida, the U.S. Census reported 266,688 Hispanic or Latino-owned firms (17.3 percent of the total firms in Florida) which generated total receipts of \$40,891,975,000, which accounts for 3.8 percent of Florida's total business receipts and almost 86 percent more than receipts generated by Black-owned firms in Florida, in 2002. The Hispanic or Latino (of any race) accounts for approximately 20 percent of Florida's population.

According to The Selig Center, The Hispanic buying power in Florida for 2006 was \$82.2 billion. Nationally, Hispanic buying power will rise from "\$212 billion in 1990, to \$490 billion in 2000, to \$798 billion in 2006, and almost \$1.2 trillion in 2011." In 1997, "about 76 percent of Hispanic business activity in Florida occurs in Miami-Dade County measured by sales and receipts," according to a 2002 report from the Department of Planning and Zoning of Miami-Dade titled "*Profile Of Hispanic-Owned Business.*" The report also found that "five metropolitan areas in the U.S. contain 34.9 percent of all the nation's Hispanic firms, and Miami is one of them. These five also claim 38.2 percent of all sales and receipts of Hispanic firms."

The data shows that approximately 78 percent of the Hispanic-owned businesses in Miami-Dade were solely owner operated with no paid employees in 1997.

The available data did not reveal the reasons for the larger revenues enjoyed by Hispanic or Latino-owned businesses in Florida, but it is clear that Black-owned businesses suffer a dual minority position behind both White and Hispanic or Latino-owned businesses in the State of Florida.

### Wages

The earnings of Blacks are not an indicator of financial equality. Hip-hop entertainers are some of the most celebrated individuals in the Black community for their perceived or actual personal wealth. Forbes Magazine reported in an article titled "Mo' Money Blues," the 2006 earnings of the following Hip-Hop artists:

1.	Shawn Carter (a.k.a. JAY-Z)	\$34 Million
2.	Curtis Jackson (a.k.a. 50 CENT)	\$32 Million
3.	Sean Combs (a.k.a. DIDDY)	\$28 Million
4.	Timothy Mosely (a.k.a. TIMBALAND)	\$21 Million
5.	Andre Young (a.k.a. DR. DRE)	\$20 Million

The earnings of Black stars are vastly different than the financial reality of a majority in the Black communities nationally and in the State of Florida. As a component of our analysis of wages in the State of Florida, we examined the presence of Black-owned businesses in the community and the jobs they provide. While a debate may exist about whether there are enough Black entrepreneurs in the Florida private sector, we examined the employment rate and types of businesses in operation within the state.

The U.S. Census Bureau data from "*Black-Owned Firms: 2002*" reported 24 cities in Florida with more than 500 Black-owned businesses. The following is a list of the cities without rank order, based on the number of businesses.

1.	Coral Springs	2.	Delray Beach	3.	West Palm beach
4.	Tampa	5.	Tamarac	6.	Tallahassee
7.	Sunrise	8.	St. Petersburg	9.	Riviera Beach
10.	Plantation	11.	Pembroke Pines	12.	Palm Bay
13.	Orlando	14.	Ocala	15.	North Miami Beach
16.	North Lauderdale	17.	Miramar	18.	Miami
19.	Lauderhill	20.	Lauderdale Lakes	21.	Jacksonville
22.	Hollywood	23.	Hialeah	24.	Fort Lauderdale

Unfortunately, the 102,053 reported Black-owned firms in Florida only employ a total of 54,742 employees, less than one employee per firm, with statewide employment by all firms accounting for 6,205,482 employees, or an average of four employees per firm in Florida.

The seven major industries in which Black-owned businesses participate nationally:

1. Health care and social assistance
2. Other services (except public administration)
3. Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services
4. Professional, scientific, and technical services
5. Transportation and warehousing
6. Arts, entertainment, and recreation
7. Real estate and rental and leasing

The seven major industries in which Black-owned businesses participate in the State of Florida:

1. Health care and social assistance
2. Other services (except public administration)
3. Administrative and support waste management and remediation services
4. Transportation and warehousing
5. Retail trade
6. Professional, scientific, and technical services
7. Construction

While we were unable to quantify the actual salary distribution by and between the reported numbers of employees in each category, the data shows an average salary range between \$20,000 and \$35,000 for all categories listed above.

The U.S. Census 2006 American Community Survey estimated that the total labor force (population 16 years and over) in Florida was 8,880,408. The median income adjusted for inflation was \$45,495; median family income adjusted for inflation was \$54,445. The per capita income adjusted for Florida was \$25,297, and income levels in Florida are similar to the national profiles in the 2006 data.

In a December 5, 2006 U.S. Census Bureau article titled “Facts for Features,” researchers reported the median income of Black men ages 15 years old and older working full time year round as \$33,077 as opposed to similarly situated Black females who earned \$29,672.

In further analyzing Black income levels, we find disparities between Black earning power and that of Whites and Hispanics. The U.S. Census Bureau News, in its article titled “Income Climbs, Poverty Stabilizes, Uninsured Rate Increases,” reported the 2005 household median income by race as follows:

Black:	\$30,858
Whites:	\$50,784
Hispanics:	\$35,967
Asians:	\$61,094

As Florida is located in the South, there is another factor at work for Black men and boys in Florida. The report found that southern households have the lowest median income with

\$42,138. In comparison, Northeast households reported \$50,882, Western households reported \$50,002 and Midwest households reported \$45,950.

And finally, Florida International University’s report, by Bruce Nissen and Yue Zhang, titled “State of Working Florida 2006,” found that the median 2005 hourly wages for the races were as follows:

1. Black: \$10.99
2. Whites: \$15.04
3. Hispanics: \$11.11

### **Poverty Levels**

The evidence of a nominal one percent difference between Black and Hispanic median wages and a 73.1 percent difference between Black and White median wages leaves much to the imagination as to the reasons for 3.1 percent disparity between Black’s and Hispanic’s poverty levels and a 16.6 percent disparity between Black’s and White’s poverty levels.

The article “Income Climbs, Poverty Stabilizes, Uninsured Rate Increases,” by the U.S. Census Bureau, reported the 2005 national poverty rates and presented the rates by race as follows:

- Black: 24.9 percent
- Hispanics: 21.8 percent
- Whites: 8.3 percent
- Asians: 11.1 percent

The previously mentioned article reported the average poverty thresholds based on earnings and the number of persons in families:

- Family of four \$19,971
- Family of three \$15,577
- Family of two \$12,755
- Unrelated Indivs. \$9,973

Poverty rates between married and non-married households are significantly different. Notably, there was a decline in the 2004 poverty rates in 2005 for families (.3 percent) and married-couple families (2.2 percent). The poverty rate for female-householder-with-no-husband-present families is 28.7 percent (4.0 million), and the poverty rate for male-householder-with-no-wife-present families is 13 percent (669,000). The U.S. Census Bureau’s Data Set: 2006 American Community Survey (S1701), reports the following poverty levels for the state of Florida:

General Population	17,686,295	12.6 percent	Below Poverty Level
White	13,508,676	10.2 percent	Below Poverty Level
Black	2,664,315	23.4 percent	Below Poverty Level
Hispanic or Latino	3,582,247	16.5 percent	Below Poverty Level



The same data source indicates that 26.4 percent of Florida's unemployed live below the poverty level. Florida's unemployed statistics consist of 22.4 percent male living below the poverty level and 30.5 percent female living below the poverty level.

The New York Times analyzed the IRS tax data for 2005 in its August 21, 2007 article titled "Average Incomes Fell for Most in 2005," by David Cay Johnston. This article found that "nearly half of Americans reported incomes of less than \$30,000, and two-thirds made less than \$50,000." It also noted that the number of taxpayers making more than \$1 million grew by 26 percent and less than a quarter of one percent of all the taxpayers "reaped 47 percent of the total income gains in 2005."

The data indicates that at least some of the disparities in the wages of Blacks are a result of the national trend of vast economic disparities across the board. While race is not always the reason for evidenced disparities, the fact that Florida, and primarily south Florida, has a large number of immigrants, compelled investigation into this matter. A recent paper by Professor Joni Hersch of Vanderbilt Law School, using data from, "The U.S. New Immigrant Survey: Overview and Preliminary Results Based on the New Immigrant Cohorts of 1996 and 2003," found that "Immigrants with the lightest skin color earn on average 8 percent to 15 percent more than comparable immigrants with the darkest skin tone." Additionally, Professor Hersch found that "[o]n average, being one shade lighter has about the same effect as having an additional year of education."

**Finally, the argument is not that all Blacks are employed in low wage careers or industries, but that a disproportionate number are in such careers or industries.** Although we could not find the following data broken down by gender, it was compelling as to the state of the Black professional community on a national level. Considering the number of Blacks in the United States, it is sad that on December 5, 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau, in its article titled "Facts for Features," reported that 26 percent of Blacks age 16 and older work in management, professional and related occupations; 44,000 are physicians and/or surgeons; 79,400 are postsecondary teachers; 45,200 are lawyers; and 49,300 are chief executives. (Sources: 2005 American Community Survey and Upcoming *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2007*, Table 602).

### **Home Ownership**

The first step in building wealth is individual homeownership. While gains have been made, the Black community is behind all others in homeownership. Nationally, 46 percent of Black households lived in owner-occupied homes (*2005 American Community Survey*). In Florida, 70 percent of the occupied housing units are owner-occupied and have a median value of \$230,600 (*2006 American Community Survey*). **In the 2006 American Community Survey, Freddie Mac reported Black homeownership at a level of 48.8 percent. A gap of 20.8 percent existed between Blacks and Whites as White homeownership was 76.6 percent. Hispanic homeownership represented 8.1 percent.**

The Florida Atlantic University's study "Charting the Course" reported that "[t]he household cost burden is highest among homeowners in Broward, followed by Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Monroe, St. Lucie, Indian River and Martin counties. Miami-Dade and Broward have the largest percentage of homeowner households statewide paying more than half of their income on housing." This regional study of the most populated area of the state indicates that many Floridians can not afford the homes that they have.

It is therefore not surprising that Florida is currently experiencing record high foreclosure rates. In March 2007, CNNMoney.com reported that "[t]here were more than 19,144 properties in some stage of foreclosure in February in the Sunshine State, up 63.5 percent from January and nearly double the number a year earlier." While we were unable to find desegregated data as to the rate of foreclosures by race, we were able to find data regarding the loans given to Blacks and Hispanics.

A study sponsored by mortgage insurer Genworth Financial, "concluded that 48 percent of home loans given to Blacks and nearly 42 percent of loans given to Hispanics last year met the government's definition of 'high-cost' loans. That compares with 18 percent for Whites and more than 24 percent for the overall population." The study defined "high-cost" loans by using the "Federal Reserve's definition of high-cost loans: *mortgages whose rates are at least 3 percentage points above comparable Treasury securities*, a category that includes most subprime loans given to people with weak credit records."

Based on the data, it can be surmised that while many Floridians are suffering from the foreclosure crisis, Blacks and Hispanics are being disproportionately impacted. The most elementary tool historically used to aid in building personal wealth is evaporating at a rapid rate from the hands of most Blacks in Florida.

### **Educational Achievement**

In this Report, the Education Outcomes Committee presents its full study and findings. The Economic Outcomes Committee presents the following benchmark data only to frame its findings and recommendations. Accessibility to the following data broken down by gender and specifically for the state of Florida would have been helpful, but in conjunction with the data from the Education Outcomes Committee, it will help in clarifying the issues affecting Black wealth.

According to the *American Community Survey*, in 2005, 80 percent of Blacks age 25 and older obtained at least a high school diploma and 17 percent of the identified population obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (nationally). **As far as advanced degrees are concerned (i.e., Masters, Ph.D., M.D., and/or J.D.), we have seen a 62 percent increase in the obtainment of these degrees by Blacks age 25 and older from 677,000 in 1995 to 1.1 million in 2005 (nationally). Between 1989 and 2004 (2.3 million), we have seen approximately 1 million more Black college students attending college or a 57 percent increase (nationally).**

The increased outcomes of Blacks 25 years of age and older in obtaining bachelor's and advanced degrees are astounding. These outcomes should be celebrated and encouraged at all levels of academia and society. However, it has not translated in increased personal wealth.

Low expectations of Black students have historically been a problem nationally as well as in Florida. Diversity Inc. magazine, in its April 2007 article titled "The Business Case for Affirmative Action," asked whether students agreed with this statement: *"In my circle of friends, going to college is something routine and expected."* The targeted audiences' responses were reported by race:

Asians	70 percent in agreement
Whites	68 percent in agreement
Blacks	46 percent in agreement
Latinos	41 percent in agreement

The issue of low expectations and/or lack of knowledge as to available resources to attend college must be addressed within each community so as to foster the continued success of our students and their ability to obtain economic power.

The level of education obtained has a direct correlation to those living below the poverty level. The 2006 Florida population 25 years and over living below the poverty level has the following educational correlation:

Less than high school graduate	22.4 percent Living below poverty
High school graduate (inc. GED)	11.3 percent Living below poverty
Some college, associate's degree	07.3 percent Living below poverty
Bachelor's degree or higher	04.6 percent Living below poverty

*Source: 2006 American Community Survey (S1701)*

The educational level of Floridians 25 years and over is competitive with the national rates:

High school graduate (incl. GED)	30.5 percent
Some college, no degree	20.5 percent
Associate degree	08.4 percent
Bachelor's degree	16.3 percent
Graduate or professional degree	08.8 percent
percent high school graduate or higher	84.6 percent
percent bachelor's degree or higher	25.1 percent

*Source: 2005 American Community Survey, August 2006*

While there are some gains to celebrate in Florida, such as the state's low unemployment rate as compared to the national average, its market place continues to be dominated by low-wage employment opportunities. The critical issue is best summarized by the "State of Working

Florida 2006," which found that: "Florida's historic problem of low-wage employment is accentuated by long-term (15 year), medium-term (5 year), and short-term (1 year) trends, showing that the state is adding jobs in low-paying industries at a faster pace than in high-paying industries."

### **Health**

The Economic Outcomes Committee studied and report in this Report on issues affecting Black men and boys but this topic also relates to wealth in the Black community, because without it, an individual may find it difficult, if not impossible, to function in his or her position as an entrepreneur or even a high wage employee. Without good health, in all areas, the ability to generate greater economic outcomes is severely impeded.

### **Conclusion**

The status of Black wealth in the state of Florida is negatively affected by the lack of entrepreneurial opportunities, low wages and high poverty levels, high costs of homeownership and increased foreclosures, and low educational outcomes. While nationally the Black community has made some forward strides, its advances are significantly outpaced and surpassed by those of other ethnic groups, causing Blacks to suffer a dual minority role behind the White community and its closest ethnic minority group, Hispanics and Latinos, in all areas.

The information in this report may seem disheartening, but there is hope. The Black community has incredible purchasing strength. This strength now needs to be turned inwards. Black consumers and Black-owned businesses must come together to increase purchases from within the Black community and provide a wider array of products and services to each other in order to increase community wealth. This simple strategy will materially aid in the growth of greater increases in economic growth, employment and individual wealth within the Black community of Florida.

We hypothesize that the Hispanic and Latino communities spend a greater share of their purchasing power within their respective communities. If true, this fact would help explain the incredible success of Hispanic and Latino-owned businesses in the state of Florida and the significant growth in wealth within these communities in such a relatively short period of time. Thus, we recommend a study of Hispanic and Latino community entrepreneurship and purchasing practices to develop strategies to apply successful economic practices to the Black community.

In regard to "Black-on-Black crime," the findings of this Committee are inconclusive. While the murder rates and other crime rates within the Black community are disproportionately higher than other ethnic communities, is it fair to categorize such criminal statistics without a comparable description for other ethnic communities? If so, for what purpose?

Economics is a critical component to the stability of any community. However, there are many Black communities throughout the African Diaspora which have greater poverty than those

in the United States or Florida with significantly lower crime rates. We recommend a study to review the familial, spiritual, economic, political, educational and social framework of Black communities in other areas of the world with greater levels of poverty as compared to that of Florida to answer the question “What causes Black-on-Black crime in Florida?”

With that said, the data clearly portrays a great disparity in earning power between Blacks and any other ethnic group. As in any community, a lack of resources creates an environment of innovation to meet the daily needs of an individual and/or family. The limited access and potential barriers to legal entrepreneurial enterprises, outside of minimum wage or low-wage jobs, may have an impact on the increased crime rates within the low to mid-income Black communities. This phenomenon may be purely a factor of proximity, access, and ability to intimidate neighbors more readily than to prey upon a diverse community ten miles away. A study of the community profiles and the related crimes actually committed within selected communities within Florida would shed more light on this hypothesis.

In addition to the recommendations made throughout this report, this Committee makes the following recommendations:

### **Recommendations**

1. Florida’s state agencies should review and analyze the participation rates of Black-owned firms, including but not limited to the number of individual businesses and the dollar amounts awarded, of Black-owned firms which provide goods and/or services through any form of bidding and/or direct contracting.
2. Identify those product and/or service codes where Black-owned firms are under represented.
3. Create informational venues to educate the Black business community as to the product and/or service codes which are in need of more Black business participation.
4. Florida’s state agencies, in consultation with other entities such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council, should develop an assessment tool to identify business capacities, strength and/or weaknesses. This assessment tool should be utilized to: 1) Determine award capacity; 2) Create business developmental programming for the contracted business; 3) Project capacity increases during multi-year contracts, including potential renewals; and 4) Identify a corporate industry peer success coach to be a resource to Black business participants.
5. Florida’s community college and university systems should offer short-term entrepreneurship educational activities and/or courses to promote business ownership and offer educational programming in the areas of management, marketing/advertising, client development, governmental procurement, and other areas of best of practices.

6. Create more financial incentives from state and local governments for new businesses and expansion of current businesses for the small and disadvantaged businesses across the state.
7. Encourage community development/re-development organizations to support mixed-use projects to provide affordable commercial space for new business growth and employment opportunities within Black communities across the state.
8. State and municipal entities should encourage joint-venturing opportunities between Black-owned business to increase contract performance capacities, shared costs and increased outcomes in the Black community.
9. State and municipal entities should conduct a historic review of their contracting policies, procedures and actual awards of contracts to determine the barriers to entry of Black-owned businesses and/or the most prevalent reasons why Black-owned businesses have not received bid awards and/or direct contracting opportunities.
10. Support community resources such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and *Who's Who*, developed by Pam and Jerome Hutchinson, to highlight and publish a statewide periodical of Black-owned businesses by product and service codes. Distribute this contact periodical to all state and municipal purchasing entities as a resource.
11. Florida should develop a comprehensive program designed to stem the tide of foreclosures within the Black community, which was more disparately impacted by unfair lending practices than any other ethnic community.
12. Florida must work with municipalities and insurance vendors to aggressively and materially decrease the burdensome costs (taxes and insurance) associated with homeownership.
13. Florida must increase the resources necessary to materially increase the educational outcomes of the Black community in parity with all other ethnic communities. (*See also the recommendations of the Education Outcomes Committee*)
14. Florida must develop and implement strategic and tactical plans to increase the presence of high-wage employers within the state, while decreasing the exponential growth and perpetuation of low-wage jobs.
15. The State, municipalities and Florida's business communities should look at greater economic opportunities for goods and services by and between Florida and the CARICOM.
16. Develop an accountable matrix to monitor the success of municipal, state and/or federally funded programs in materially impacting the lives of participants economically, socially, educationally and with regards to health.

# EDUCATION

*“Are there more Black men in prisons than there are in colleges and universities? That’s the question I’ll be asking next year. I want to see how it affects not just the economy and the family, but the whole life of the family.”*

***Levi Williams, Council Chair***

*“The legislature should create permissive language to allow single-sex classes and schools for our young men to be taught by men, thus having appropriate role models.”*

***Senator Stephen Wise, Council Member***

*“I’m concerned about prevention, intervention and motivation: we should try to prevent Black men and boys from engaging in crime, intervene in situations where crime is already being committed, and encourage and motivate those who are not engaging in crime but trying to better their lives through education.”*

***Dr. Albert Simpson, Council Member***

## **Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes**

**Dr. Billy Close – Chair**

Mr. Bill James

Mr. Christopher Norwood

Rev. Dr. Albert Simpson Jr.

Chairman Levi Williams

Senator Frederica Wilson

Mr. David Pridgen

## EDUCATION

### Improving Educational Outcomes and Reducing Crime among Florida's Black Males: A Preliminary Report

All across the nation, states are increasingly recognizing the growing crisis affecting the life chances of five million Black boys in the United States. Particularly alarming is the fact that schools nationwide are only graduating 42 percent of Black males who enter the ninth grade (Zen, 2006). Orfield, Losen, Wald, and Swanson (2004), report dismally low national high school graduation rates for all students with only an estimated 68 percent of those who enter the ninth grade graduating with a regular diploma in twelfth grade.

It is generally held that low levels of educational attainment are highly correlated with higher levels of criminal and delinquent behavior among both youth and adults (Justice Policy Institute, 2007; Wang et al., 2005; Lochner and Moretti, 2004). Zen (2006) notes that discrimination in school disciplinary procedures and special education, among other things, has created the kind of dramatically disproportionate statistics that help build the school-to-prison pipeline. Unfortunately, this ignominious pipeline is often filled with failing, frustrated, hopeless and angry Black males and continues to reach across America disrupting communities, devastating families and destroying trans-generational ambitions.

Given the aforementioned stark reality, attempting to reduce crime rates by improving the educational opportunities and successful outcomes of "at-risk" Black youth and incarcerated Black youths and adults, has been one of the primary strategies employed by national, state and local officials concerned with delinquency prevention and recidivism reduction. Mandates such as the federal government's 2001 No Child Left Behind Act are primary examples of a specific education policy initiative enacted to bring about a series of sweeping reforms of both public and juvenile justice schools to hopefully facilitate delinquency prevention and increased educational attainment (Wang, et al., 2005). **Implicit within this Act is a belief that there is a relationship between educational attainment and delinquency.**

According to Lochner and Moretti (2004) while there are a number of reasons to believe that there is a *causal* link between education and crime, and despite the enormous policy implications, there is little known about the relationship between schooling and criminal behavior and the existing empirical research is inconclusive. However, drawing upon theoretical reasoning suggesting that education reduces crime by raising earnings and making individuals less impatient or more risk averse, Lochner and Moretti (2004) employ census data on incarceration, UCR reports, and self-report data on crime and incarceration from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to demonstrate that successful schooling significantly reduces criminal activity.



**Recent major findings from the Justice Policy Institute (2007) comparing state-level education data with crime and incarceration rates support the education-crime connection.**

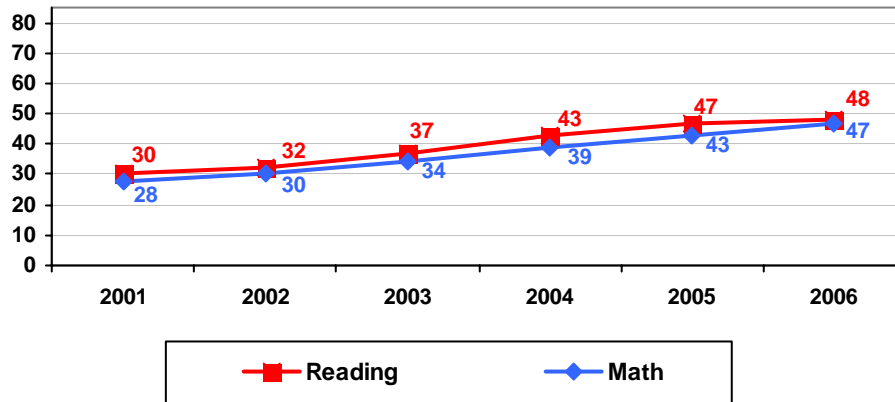
Major findings include:

- States that have focused more on education tend to have lower violent crime rates and lower incarceration rates.
- A 5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses.
- States with higher levels of educational attainment also had crime rates lower than the national average.
- States with higher college enrollment rates experience lower violent crime rates than states with lower college enrollment rates.
- States that made bigger investments in higher education saw better public safety outcomes.
- The risk of incarceration, higher violent crimes and lower educational attainment are concentrated among communities of color, who are more likely to suffer from barriers to educational opportunities.

**Assessing Educational Outcomes among Florida's Black Males:  
A Closer Look**

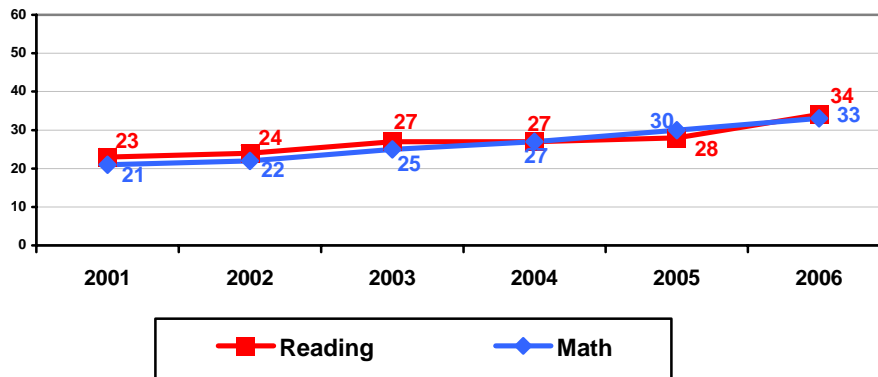
Startling statistics best characterize the striking disparity between the educational success of Black males as compared to other racial and gender groups throughout United States and in the state of Florida. While many are alarmed by the large number of Black boys not graduating from high school, the problems begin much earlier. **The latest results from the Florida Department of Education's administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) reveal that in 2006, more than 50 percent of Black males in elementary school grades 3-5 performed below grade level in math and reading, more than 65 percent of Black males in middle school grades 6-8 performed below grade level in math and reading, and 84 percent of Black males in high school grades 9-10 performed below grade level in reading.** Additionally, almost 60 percent of Black males in grades 9-10 performed below grade level in math. Comparatively in 2006, less than 23 percent of White males in grades 3-5 performed below grade level in math and reading, less than 32 percent of White males in grades 6-8 performed below grade level in math and reading, and less than 55 percent of White males in grades 9-10 performed below grade level in reading. Additionally, only 24 percent of White males in grades 9-10 performed below grade level in math.

**Chart 1**  
**FCAT Reading and Math, Grades 3-5**  
**Percent of Black Male Students Scoring At Level 3 and Above**



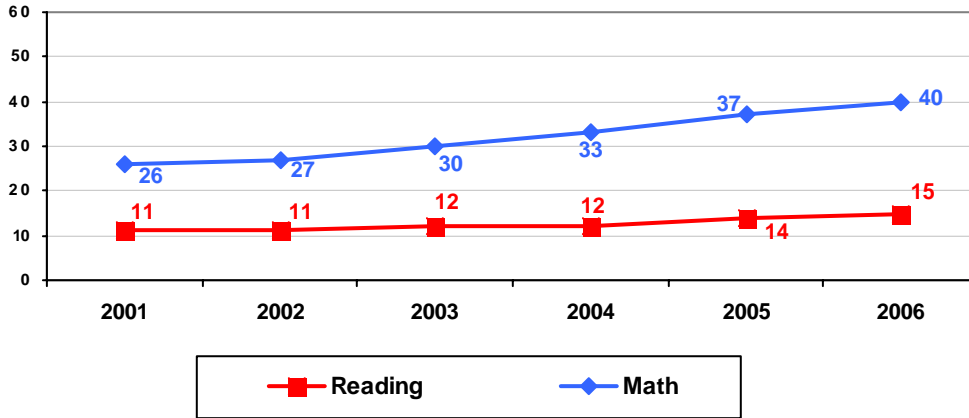
*Source: Florida Department of Education PK-20 Education Data Warehouse, as of 4/13/2007*

**Chart 2**  
**FCAT Reading and Math, Grades 6-8**  
**Percent of Black Male Students Scoring At Level 3 and Above**



*Source: Florida Department of Education PK-20 Education Data Warehouse, as of 4/13/2007*

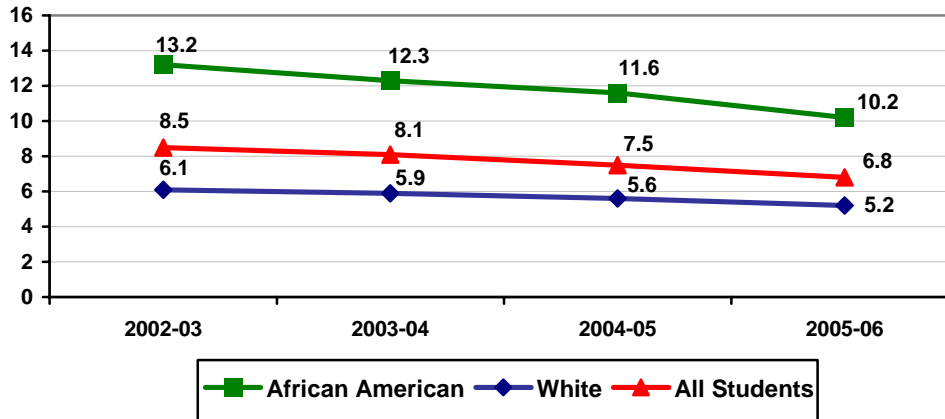
**Chart 3**  
**FCAT Reading and Math, Grades 9-10**  
**Percent of Black Male Students Scoring At Level 3 and Above**



*Source: Florida Department of Education PK-20 Education Data Warehouse, as of 4/13/2007*

Black males are significantly more likely to be retained, more likely to drop out and are less likely to graduate than White males. Non-promotion rates among all Black students in 2005-2006 accounted for 34 percent of all K-12 non-promotions. Non-promotion rates among all Black males in high school are higher (10.2 percent) when compared to White males (5.2 percent).

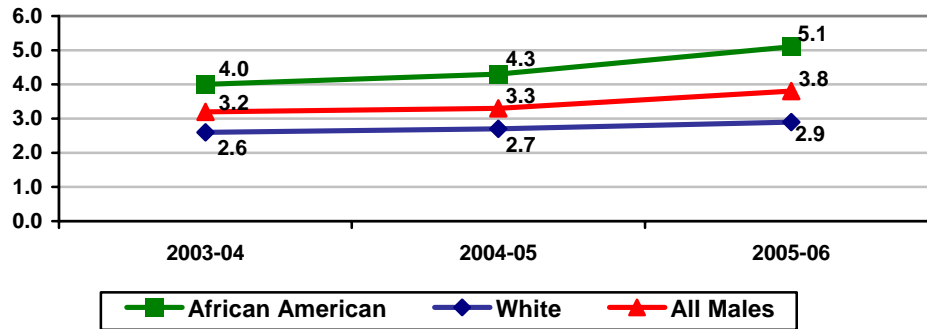
**Chart 4**  
**K-12 Non-Promotion Rates**  
**Percent by Race**



*Source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services, Statistical Briefs on non-promotions. Link: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/eiaspubs/briefs.htm>*

Dropout rates among Black males in Florida reveal yet another achievement gap. Annual dropout rates from 2005-06 reveal that Black males are more likely to drop out of high school than White males, 5.1 percent and 2.9 percent respectively.

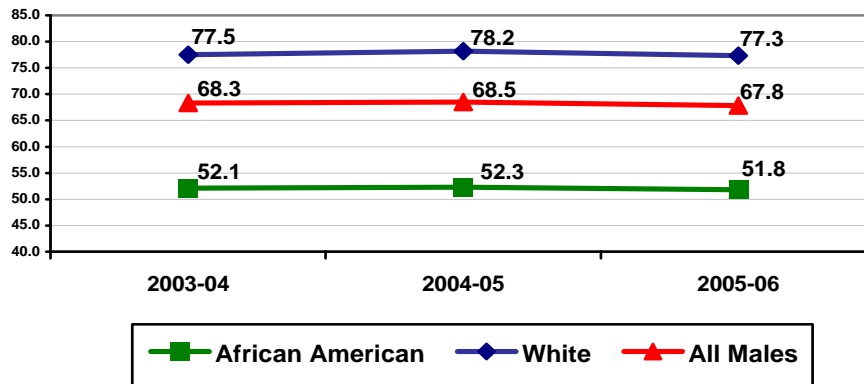
**Chart 5**  
**Annual High School Dropout Rates for Male Students**  
**Percent by Race**



Source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services

Not surprisingly, given the adverse retention and dropout data, the four-year graduation rates for Black males are also significantly lower than that of White males, 51.8 percent and 77.3 percent respectively.

**Chart 6**  
**Four-Year High School Graduation Rates for Male Students**  
**Percent by Race**



Source: Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services

## Statewide Enrollment – Community Colleges and Universities

The overall growth trend for Black males enrolled in community colleges is improving slightly. In 2000-01, Black males represented 12.9 percent of the total male population enrolled in community colleges. For community colleges, the enrollment of Black males grew from 16,618 to 19,904 with a peak in 2004-05 of 21,055 or 14.4 percent.

The overall growth trend for Black males enrolled in state universities is declining based on percentages; however, actual numbers are trending upward. For example, in 2000-01, Black males represented 12.2 percent of the total male population enrolled in state universities, and by 2006-07, this percentage dropped to 11.7 percent. The actual number of Black males enrolled increased from 12,676 to 14,817 during that same time period.

Identifying the specific causal variables which help to explain the stark disparities in educational achievement between Black and other demographic groups lies at the heart of nearly every major policy discussion about the economic, social and political status of Black males in Florida and throughout the nation. The collateral consequences of underachievement in education among Black males are staggering. According to Coley and Barton (2006:3), “the incarceration of young Black males, particularly high school drop-outs has reached levels that jeopardize the achievement of broader social justice goals.” Coley and Barton (2006) also note that the national incarceration rate for Black 25-to-29-year-old males in 2004 was 13 percent compared to 2 percent for Whites and 4 percent for Hispanics. For young Black males without a high school diploma, there are about as many in prison as there are employed, and it is estimated that more than 50 percent have a prison record, compared to one in ten White males.

Undeniably evident is the fact that increasing numbers of Black males who are high school drop-outs are rapidly flowing into Florida’s juvenile detention and adult correctional facilities at annual rates that are alarming to public officials and concerned citizens alike. Also evident is that despite the myriad of programs and initiatives that have been developed to reverse the dismal trends of low academic achievement and increased reliance on punitive methods of social control, the deficits, defects and disadvantages of being born Black and male in America persist and appear to be trans-generational.

**While all segments of the Florida population are potentially impacted by the enormity of different negative conditions affecting Black men and boys, the Black community is particularly distressed by higher rates of arrest and incarceration, homicide, poverty, infant mortality and other health problems affecting Black males.** In addition, low levels of educational attainment, disparate wealth and annual income levels, lack of homeownership, Black-on-Black crime, violence, and drug abuse are also negative conditions that weigh heavily on the daily lives of many members of Florida’s Black population. In light of the aforementioned dilemmas facing the citizens of Florida, one of the critical areas of concern identified by the Council is education. Educational attainment, most notably graduation from high school, serves as a critically important benchmark in the process of successfully transitioning into adulthood (Justice Policy Institute, 2007). Thus, the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes was created as a committee of the Council.

## **Goals and Objectives of the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes**

The long-term goals of the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes Among Blacks are as follows: 1) define educational success and identify the population of Black students with supporting data; 2) disaggregate all data along race, gender, ethnicity/nationality, socio-economic (Title-1 Free and Reduced Lunch recipients), location, and age/grade level; 3) perform a systematic study of academic performance at all levels; 4) develop and implement a procedure to secure input on associated issues from the legislature, governmental agencies, public and private organizations, and private citizens; 5) identify the role education plays in cultural identity trauma and cultural impact (including, but not limited to, family, education and community involvement); 6) identify barriers to entry to higher education with supporting data; 7) identify those elements that prevent completion of k-12 education with a diploma with supporting data; 8) identify elements associated with those Black men and boys who have been educationally successful with supporting data; 9) issue findings, conclusions and recommendations for Council consideration; and 10) consider any other charges that the Council and/or the Committee may identify.

Given the complexity of the aforementioned long-term goals, the short-term goals of the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes among Blacks during the first year were to:

- Preliminarily assess the research evidence of Black male school achievement as measured by the Florida Department of Education data.
- Assess the concerns of community stakeholders by participating in a series of community forums throughout major cities in the state of Florida, including Tallahassee, Orlando, Jacksonville, and Broward County.
- Identify future Council and Committee priorities and objectives in collaboration with community stakeholders.
- Provide a preliminary report of findings and recommendations to the Council for consideration and approval.
- Identify community members with expertise to serve on the committee and provide research assistance.
- Identify prominent academic researchers and professional experts willing to provide expert testimony and information to the Committee and Council on relevant educational issues.
- Identify and develop effective relationships with national, state, and local institutions and organizations working on educational issues throughout the State.
- Identify intervention programs with proven records of success working with Black males.

### **Literacy**

An analysis of recent assessment data by the Florida Department of Education reveals that between 2001 and 2006 Black males reduced the achievement gap (as measured by FCAT) compared to White males in the areas of elementary reading and math, middle school math and reading, and in high school math. However, there was no improvement made in closing the gap in the area of high school reading. Additionally, in 2006 only 48 percent of Black males in grades 3-5, and 34 percent of Black males in grades 6-8 performed at grade level and above in

reading. Comparatively, 65 percent of White males in grades 3-5, and 68 percent of White males in grades 6-8 performed at grade level and above in 2006. Shockingly, only 15 percent of Black males in grades 9-10 performed at grade level and above in reading, compared to 46 percent of White males in the same grades. These data reveal that there appears to be a serious disconnect in performance for Black males beginning in middle schools throughout the state of Florida.

### **Cultural Awareness and Teacher Competence**

**According to Ferguson (2000), scholars who study the impact of race on the educational system find that, unless they prove otherwise through poor school performance, White students are presumed to have potential based on talent and ability.** In contrast, students of color are presumed to have deficiencies that require special assistance. Thus for White students, “discourse of potential” gives them benefits and opportunities based on how they are perceived. A “discourse of deficit” means that minority students are almost always expected to fail, and will not stand out if and when they do so. According to Dr. Denise St. Patrick-Bell, Dean, Teacher Education, Holcombe Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence at Broward Community College, research demonstrates that students perform better academically and socially with teachers who look like them in either gender or race. The reality, of course, is that there simply are not enough minority or Black male students who are entering the teaching profession to accommodate the needs of Black males. The issue then becomes how we diversify the current workforce to affect the academic outcome of these underserved and endangered students.

While most school districts have a Diversity Office and present workshops on cultural diversity, many do not deal with cultural competence which requires a deeper understanding and application of diversity principles. Although a wide body of literature exists on multi-cultural competency, cultural relevance and critical science of teaching, it has rarely been translated into action research or implemented at the classroom level. For instance, a simple understanding and application of cultural intonation patterns, non-verbal communication and body positioning has had dramatic results in the classroom for Caucasian teachers in Black schools. **Dr. Bell further states that there needs to be a discussion regarding how the “dissonance in the cultures” is negatively affecting an entire generation. There needs to be a gathering of competent professional educators who can create curricula for colleges of education and school districts which will lead to culturally competent teachers.**

This issue is critical. Just as teachers are tested on their academic/cognitive skills before they enter the profession, they need to also be tested in the affective and psycho-social domain as well. How multi-culturally competent are they? As long as cultural competency is viewed as something outside the core curriculum and course sequence of the colleges of education, multicultural incompetency will remain a feature of higher education. Cultural competency and its impact on student success are as pervasive as the air we breathe and just as essential to the survival of those who are “different” in the context of majority classrooms.

## **Disciplinary Outcomes**

Discriminatory implementation of school disciplinary policies and procedures was one of the most recurring themes throughout the deliberations of the Council and the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes. Numerous public testimonials by citizens, school administrators, teachers and frustrated parents lamented the dramatically disproportionate impact of zero-tolerance policies on the educational opportunities of Black male students. The fairness of discretionary decision-making authorities, including school resource officers, deans of students, principals, teachers, and the like, were repeatedly called into question during each of the public meetings.

A preliminary analysis of the 2005-2006 statewide disciplinary data from the Florida Department of Education reveals that Black youth enrolled in elementary, middle and high schools are more likely to be suspended than their White counterparts. While at the time of this report disaggregated statewide disciplinary data by combined *race and gender* are unavailable, available first semester data from the 2005-2006 school year in Broward County reveals that Black males are twice as likely as White males to be suspended from school.

Obviously, significantly more attention needs to be directed towards the statewide and district level policies, procedures and outcomes of school discipline throughout Florida.

## **Barriers to Success**

A number of Florida higher education institutions have programs in place to improve the success and retention of Black males and boys. Programs in Broward, Dade and Palm Beach counties are just a few created to address this disconcerting issue.

Kamau Bobb, a product of the public education systems in both New York City and Georgia, states in his article “The Paradox of Black Male Initiatives,” that he has been an object of academic initiatives created to address the academic needs of Black males. In this same article, he refers to a disconnection of these initiatives, the performance gaps they are based on and the social reality faced by Black male students.

“All of the initiatives are designed to (1) identify the obstacles to Black male college admission and retention; (2) devise and support programmatic interventions to mitigate those obstacles; and (3) to provide a small annual budget to accomplish goals one and two. The problem with these initiatives is that they exist in a political climate that is increasingly conservative. The mechanisms that would support their objectives are weakened, if not totally eradicated, by the anti-affirmative action climate in which universities currently exist. The question becomes “what can we do?”

At a meeting of the Council in Broward County, members were informed of the myriad of programs in place to improve the success and retention of the Black males and boys in Broward, Dade and Palm Beach counties. Below are highlights of findings based on the presenter’s comments: Black males exhibit the highest high school drop-out rate with expulsion rates



inordinately high among Black males. Only one percent of Black males read at grade level. Recently, a community college project had as one of its objectives the identification of barriers impeding the academic success of Black males, via the use of a focus group. The success and remedies for barriers were varied. However, there were some commonalities:

- Lack of support from family and significant others
- Lack of financial support
- First generation to attend college
- Unfamiliarity with college
- Unwelcoming college environment, i.e., curriculum not reflecting diversity, not enough diversity among faculty, student programs not reflecting diversity
- Lack of support programs for Black males

**Possible recommendations to address barriers include:**

- Develop peer mentoring programs for Black males
- Conduct special orientation sessions for parents of Black males
- Develop special intervention efforts for Black males in middle and high schools
- Establish life skills programs for Black males
- Conduct workshops for faculty and others to increase sensitivity to needs of minority males
- Assess student programs to determine inclusion of diversity

The lingering effects of centuries of exclusion and institutionalized discrimination on the Black population in general has created a plethora of contemporary deficits, defects, and disadvantages among Black males.

Are there more Black men in prison than there are in college in the state of Florida? Data from the Florida Department of Corrections shows that in 2005-2006, 42,174 Black males were incarcerated. Data is not yet available for 2006-2007. In 2006-07, a year later, 47,608 Black males were enrolled in Florida's Community Colleges, State Universities, and select private institutions. Now is the time to be creative with programs embraced by all segments of our communities. We cannot afford to lose another generation of Black males. While the national data comparisons for 2005-2006 shows 4:1 ratio college vs. prison, Florida data is too close to tell. The Council recommends that law enforcement procedures be created and implemented to have all local municipal jails report incarcerations by:

1. Race
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Criminal Violation

### **Preliminary Recommendations and Observations**

Given the first year goal of the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes to broadly examine the scope of the problems, issues, and factors related to improving the educational outcomes of Black males in Florida, the following recommendations are very preliminary in nature and are primarily gleaned from information gathered from full Council deliberations, committee meetings, public forums and testimonials, reviews of relevant literature, and information submitted to the Council and committee for consideration. Many of these recommendations may already be implemented fully or partially within the state. Determining the degree of efficiency that the Department of Education implements the applicable recommendations below should be a major focus of the future work of the Committee on Improving Educational Outcomes.

- Support the establishment of a university-based research institute with faculty whose interests and work supports the efforts of the Council. Commission a study of district progress on successfully educating and graduating Black males ready for college in order to create a sense of urgency. Require annual updates on study indicators (Sen, 2006).
- Beginning in 2008, establish “5000 Role Models of Excellence” programs in every county within the state with the goal of having a program in every school by 2012.
- Require all public and charter schools to collect student disciplinary data, including teacher/SRO referral rates, suspension rates and grade distributions (along with rationale and outcomes) for all K-12 teachers and staff. Data must be disaggregated by race, gender, violation and punishment. Create a reporting tool to track incidents and compare punishments. Conduct surveys of impacted family members. **Rationale: The accountability required by the NCLB does not reach down to the level of the teacher.**
- Collect, disaggregate and disseminate student data by race: all schools reports of achievement patterns, graduation numbers/rates, drop out numbers/rates disaggregated by race, gender and school zip code. Disaggregate to look for overrepresentation of Black males in special education programs, underrepresentation of Black males in Gifted /Talented programs and discriminatory implementation of discipline policies (Sen, 2006).
- The Department of Education, school superintendents and Department of Juvenile Justice staff should partner to evaluate, amend and/or rescind K-12 zero tolerance policies and practices to eliminate the referral of youth to DJJ for misdemeanor offenses, and which disproportionately affect Black males (Blue Print Commission, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2007; Sen, 2006).

- Establish and implement an aggressive recruitment program for Black male and female teachers. Require schools to create supportive professional environments for Black teachers (Sen, 2006).
- Propose legislation to develop systematic reporting mechanisms for monitoring all disciplinary procedures in schools and universities throughout Florida.
- Propose legislation for the development of all-male (single-sex) schools in selected areas throughout Florida.
- Given that education policy is primarily driven by data from DOE, we may need to develop rigorous mechanisms for triangulating the data in order to assess its validity.
- Create a sustainable statewide grass roots movement and public support for improving the successful life outcomes for Black males by partnering with local groups and organizations.
- Establish as a goal/measure of accountability for educational institutions within the state, that all Black male students in high school and college are routinely graduating on par with rising national graduation rates. Set policies and goals that are measurable and focused on Black male student on-time graduation with college-level preparation (Sen, 2006).
- Require quarterly home visits and/or weekly phone calls of a constructive nature from teachers and principals to parents of students who are earning less than C average or are clearly underperforming even if their grades are on average a C or even better (Sen, 2006).
- Develop peer mentoring and other special intervention programs such as the Young Black Male Discovery Project for Black males in all elementary, middle and high schools.
- Provide special voluntary orientation programs for parents of Black males entering high school and first generation students entering college.
- Promote legislation that funds community colleges working with community-based organizations, religious organizations and school districts to combat negative academic experiences of Black males.

# **FOSTER CARE, FAMILY AND ADOPTION**

*“As a Community, State and Nation, we must teach our youth ways and reasons to value their lives so they will treat their lives with value!”*

*Lillian Lima, Council Member*

*“We have a lot of different organizations constantly re-inventing the wheel, but this is a very tight fiscal year. Because of that, collaborations are all that more important.”*

*Tamara Yang Demko, Council Member*

## **Committee on Improving Foster Care and Families Issues**

**Mr. Christopher Norwood – Chair**

Dr. Billy Close

Representative Frank Peterman

Dr. Imran Ali, Community Participant

Dr. Adela Beckerman, Community Participant

Ms. Daleta Christensen, Community Participant

Ms. Rachel Sottile, Community Participant

## FOSTER CARE, FAMILY AND ADOPTION

### Overview

Black children in Florida, especially Black boys, are overrepresented in the State's Foster Care System. In 2005-2006 there were 29,000 youth in Florida's Out of Home Care System (Relative/Non Relative Care and State Custody). Another 17,500 children are apart of the In-Home Services system (Family Preservation Services and Post-Placement Supervision). Although Blacks comprise 14-15 percent of the general population in Florida (2000 Census), Black youth make up 42 percent of the youth served in Out of Home Services and 37 percent of youth In-Home Services.

<b>In-Home Services</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Black Males</b>
Family Preservation Services	11,016	4,105	2,046
Post-Placement Services	6,519	2,403	1,229
<b>In-Home Services Subtotal</b>	<b>17,535</b>	<b>6,508</b>	<b>3,275</b>
<b>Out-of-Home Care</b>			
Relative/Non-Relative Care	15,472	6,091	3,045
Relative	12,964	5,153	2,593
Non-Relative	2,508	938	452
State Custody	13,763	6,052	3,247
<b>Out-of-Home Care Subtotal</b>	<b>29,235</b>	<b>12,143</b>	<b>6,292</b>
<b>Total Children Served</b>	<b>46,770</b>	<b>1,8651</b>	<b>9,567</b>
<b>Young Adults Served</b>	<b>2,140</b>	<b>1,297</b>	<b>508</b>
<b>Total Children and Young Adults Served</b>	<b>48,910</b>	<b>19,948</b>	<b>10,075</b>

The implications of the large and growing number of children of color in foster care extend to the quality of services these children receive while in care. Children of color often receive differential treatment in the foster care system. Research indicates that Black children remain in foster care longer, receive fewer services, are less likely to have service plans and visit with their parents less often. Research also shows that as many as three in ten homeless adults were formerly children in foster care. (*Foster Care Today*, Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support).

Clearly these are issues affecting the social status of Black men and boys in Florida. Foster care youth commit a disproportionate amount of juvenile crime and many find themselves aged out of the system without a high school diploma and homeless. Improving the foster care system will improve the lives of Black boys and their future as adults (February 2001 National Institute of Justice report, Research in Brief: An Update on the Cycle of Violence, revealed that experiencing childhood abuse and neglect increased the likelihood of juvenile arrest by 59 percent.)

Unfortunately, the State of Florida acts as the parent (state custody) for 13,000 (est.) Black children at any moment in time. The state also provides in-home services for another 7,000 (est.) Black youth for a total of 20,000 (est.) of the 46,833 total youth of all races under the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). **Almost 10,000 Black boys in Florida depend on DCF to protect them and provide for their development, safety and transition into adulthood.**

Many roads lead these children to state supervision and something needs to be done to prevent them from taking that road. Once they have arrived at the door step of DCF, what shall our state do? The Foster Care Committee lists three interventions we feel the state can achieve that can improve the system. We offer these remedies to improve the foster care system for Black boys in particular and all youth in general.

### **Relative Caregiver (Kinship Care)**

#### **Background**

Historically, we know that relatives have often stepped in when parents were unable to care for their children, but when the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 passed, forming the basis for federal foster care policy, kin were very rarely formally designated as foster parents for related children. Today, child welfare agencies increasingly consider relatives as the first placement choice when foster care is needed and a relative is available to provide a safe home. Kinship care, defined as the full-time care and nurturing of a child by a relative, was once considered an uncertain placement option but has become central to any discussion about how best to support and nurture children in foster care. Children placed with relatives remain more connected to their birth parents, extended families and communities than children in unrelated foster care. Many times, kinship care providers face a more challenging parenting environment than unrelated foster parents.

This has an enormous impact on Black families because Black youth find themselves in kinship care more often than any other group of children. Black children are most likely to live in kinship care settings, at levels four to five times greater than those for non-Hispanic, White children. Almost 70 percent of relative caregivers are the child's grandparents (According to Kin Ship Collaborative and University of South Florida School of Social Work). Blacks are 40 percent of the youth in Florida's Relative Caregiver Program (5,153 of the 12,964), and 40 percent of approved non-relative Caregivers are also Black. This group of caregivers receives no stipend and few services.

In 1979, the United States Supreme Court ruled that foster kinship caregivers who met the standards for federal foster care were entitled to the same federal benefits as nonrelated foster caregivers. However, in many instances, fewer services are provided to these parents (Berrick and Barth, 1994). In Florida, children placed with relative caregivers and eligible for the 1998 Relative Caregiver Program can receive no more than 82 percent of the foster care board rate allowed foster parents. At the same time, the Relative Caregiver Program payments are 70 percent of the foster care board rate. Although the relative caregivers are not required to meet the

licensing standards for foster care, other criteria are required. The primary requirements are that the relative must be within the fifth degree of relationship to the parent (which would include, for example, great-grandnephews or nieces, first cousins once removed, but not second cousins once removed or first cousins twice removed) and the children must have been adjudicated dependent with custody given to the relative caregiver by the juvenile court.

The kinship caregiver population is much older than the parent caregiver population. Although over 95 percent of the parents who live with their own children are below the age of 50, over one-half of all kinship caregivers are 50 years of age or greater. Compared to parents who live with their children, kinship caregivers tend more often to be currently unmarried, less educated, unemployed or out of the labor force. Many live in poverty and receive benefits through government social welfare programs. Since the caregivers are usually grandparents, they are more likely to become physically, emotionally and financially exhausted. Unless the caregivers adopt the child, which is usually not the case, they risk the parents returning at any time to take back the children. The effects of this can be devastating.

### **Relative Care in Florida**

According to the Year 2000 Census, relatives are raising over 345,000 children in Florida. Almost 10 percent of the state's child population is raised by relatives of their biological parents. Some of the challenges kinship caregivers face include a lack of financial and legal assistance, respite, mental health services and affordable housing. Additionally, many caregivers face difficulties in enrolling children in school or obtaining medical services due to only informal arrangement with the biological parents.

### **Model Program: Kinship Care Connection in Tampa**

Kinship Care Connection is located in Tampa and develops, maintains and strengthens support groups for kinship caregivers and their children living in the community. It collaborates with the community through the establishment of a Kinship Care Advisory Committee and develops new, innovative services in the community to address the needs and concerns of the kinship family. Kinship Care Connection researches and develops techniques for working with children, kinship caregivers, biological parents, school systems, local and state service provider agencies and the community. This program also serves as a statewide clearinghouse of kinship care information obtained at local, state and federal level of government for service providers and caregivers.

Kinship Care Connection provides training for service provider agencies and universities, and kinship caregivers provide leadership and direction for statewide efforts to address the growing needs of all kinship caregivers. It also provides direct services to kinship caregivers throughout Florida by means of the Kinship Care Warmline, a statewide listening line for kinship caregivers who need emotional support and information and federal services, and provides direct services to children living in kinship care families through a school-based intervention pilot project.

Kinship Care Connection achieved significant accomplishments in 2000. First, in January 2000, the Kinship Support Center received \$100,000 from the Florida Legislature to

work with Nova Southeastern University (Nova) and Florida International University (FIU) to increase services to kinship caregivers in the state of Florida. University of South Florida's (USF's) Kinship Support Center was the lead agency in funding. The Kinship Support Center, in conjunction with Nova and FIU wrote ten curriculum modules to train service providers working with kinship caregivers in the state of Florida. The Kinship Support Center created a statewide Kinship Care Warmline in February 2000.

In February 2000, the Kinship Support Center published Kinship Care in Hillsborough County, with funding provided by the Children's Board of Hillsborough County. This study describes the results of focus groups conducted with kinship caregivers in Hillsborough County. Finally, in July 2000, the Kinship Support Center implemented an innovative school-based intervention program, entitled The Kinship Care Connection, which provides children with supportive services through support groups and personal advocacy, as well as connecting them to additional services and resources.

### **Recommendation**

School Districts should be required to develop Kinship Care Support Programs through their student services departments and implement kinship programs. In many instances, public schools are the only places we can reach our youth. Additionally, if they can prove that the dependent child has a lasting relationship with them prior to dependency, non-relative caregivers should receive cash benefits for caring for a dependent child. We should do what we can to encourage friends of parents or god parents to care for their loved ones.

## **Transitioning To Adulthood and Aging Out**

### **Background**

Under federal and state law, all adolescent foster youth are entitled to a wide range of Independent Living (IL) services to prepare the youth to transition to adulthood. Congress passed the federal Independent Living Initiative in 1985 to provide specific funding to the states to assist older foster youth (42 U.S.C. Sec. 677). However, states have not adequately prepared foster children to survive on their own upon reaching adulthood. Nationwide studies have shown that 20 percent to 40 percent of our country's homeless population consists of former foster children. Studies also have shown that former foster children are disproportionately represented on welfare rolls, in state prisons, and in state psychiatric institutions. Because of evidence of the dire circumstances faced by foster children who have not been prepared for adulthood, Congress amended the federal Independent Living Initiative through the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. See 42 U.S.C. Sec 677. This act became known as the "John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program" and greatly increased IL funding available to states. Florida's share of federal IL funding, which was formerly \$900,000, increased to approximately \$10 million per year, which is supplemented by state funding.

Florida law also mandates that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) prepare all adolescent foster youth for adulthood. Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes, known as the Road to Independence Act, provides that DCF "shall administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at



age 18 to the make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults. The goals of independent living transition services are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults”. The Act requires DCF to provide IL services, skills training, and financial assistance to current and former foster youth age 13 to 23.

### **Transition to Adulthood in Florida**

In Florida, foster youth have identified a serious lack of Independent Living training as one of their main concerns. The Miami Chapter of Florida Youth SHINE (Striving High for Independence and Empowerment) is the first chapter of a new statewide foster youth advocacy organization and is led by current and former foster youth age 13 to 23. Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter issued a report in which the youth eloquently expressed their concern as follows:

“While most youth look forward to their 18th birthday, being discharged from foster care can be a very difficult and frightening experience for us as foster youth. It is an especially frightening experience if we have not been prepared by the foster care system to live on our own. Most youth have families to serve as a safety net for them, but most foster youth do not have any families to help us. We do not want to become one of the statistics of the many former foster youth who end up homeless, on welfare, in jail, or in psychiatric programs upon their discharge from foster care. To be successful with living on our own, we need to have independent living skills training provided to us during our adolescent and teenage years in foster care, and we need continued training after age 18 while we are in the Road to Independence program. . . . However, many of us do not receive required independent living skills training.” *See* Miami Chapter of Florida Youth SHINE report “*Seeing Through Our Eyes: Foster Youth Share Our Voices, Our Experiences, and Our Solutions*” (May 2007).

Indeed, the findings of Florida’s Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) in three reports have confirmed the youth’s concerns regarding the lack of Independent Living services provided to Florida’s foster youth. *See* OPPAGA report “Improved Fiscal and Quality Oversight is Needed for the Independent Living Program” (Feb. 2007); OPPAGA report “Improvements in Independent Living Services Will Better Assist State’s Struggling Youth” (Dec. 2005); OPPAGA report “Independent Living Minimum Standards Recommended for Children in Foster Care” (Nov. 2004). Additionally, DCF’s Independent Living Advisory Council (ILAC) has echoed similar concerns regarding the lack of IL services provided to Florida’s transitioning foster youth. *See* ILAC “Report of Independent Living Services for Florida’s Foster Youth” (2006) & 2007.

### **Recommendations**

Florida should implement the recommendations of foster youth themselves regarding the assistance they need to successfully transition to adulthood. Recently the legislature passed a bill sponsored by Council Member Senator Wilson that specifically targets Black children for adoption. This bill provides monetary incentives for teachers to adopt at risk youth. The bill

provides a benefit of \$10,000 for a “special needs child,” which includes children of “minority race or of a racially mixed heritage.” Initiatives such as these are vital in promoting the adoption of Black children.

Additionally, faith-based organizations can also be a method to promote adoption within the Black community. Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter has made two recommendations regarding the provision of Independent Living services. First, the chapter recommended that every community based care (CBC) agency serving foster youth should offer weekly Independent Living skills classes to all current and former foster youth age 13 to 23, as well as transport the youth to enable them to attend the classes. For those foster youth placed in residential treatment centers, shelters, or other facilities, Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter recommended that the CBC agencies offer weekly IL skills classes at the facilities to ensure that institutionalized youth receive the same training. Second, Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter recommended that IL Life Skills Coaches should be provided to every youth transitioning out of foster care to help youth individually with the basic tasks they need to accomplish to live on their own. *See* Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter “Seeing Through Our Eyes” report. These important recommendations should be implemented.

To further assist foster youth, Miami’s Youth SHINE chapter also recommended that the foster care system provide an Ombudsperson for youth to call when they are having difficulty obtaining needed help. This important recommendation also should be implemented. Florida should create an office for a foster youth ombudsperson, similar to the ones in California and other states. Even without this office, DCF should advertise its existing DCF Client Relations office to all foster youth, provide the youth with the local phone number, and encourage the youth to call their local DCF Client Relations office if the youth have been unable to obtain needed assistance. The DCF Client Relations office also should be advertised to relative caregivers and foster parents who are attempting to obtain assistance for youth. At every monthly visit, the youth’s caseworker should be required to provide in writing their contact information, their supervisor’s contact information, and the contact information for the local DCF Client Relations Office to both youth and their caretakers.

In addition, it is very important that adolescent foster youth be able to exercise their legal right to participate in their court hearings. Too often, foster youth are not transported to their court hearings and therefore are denied their legal right to be heard by the judge. As a result, foster youth are not heard when decisions are being made about their life and future, and the youth are not able to inform the judge about the assistance they need but are not receiving. To resolve this, a plan should be in place in every district to ensure that adolescent foster youth are transported to their court hearings. Also, at every monthly visit, the adolescent foster youth’s caseworker should be required to provide the youth with written information on the youth’s next scheduled court hearing, confirmation as to how the youth will be transported to the hearing, contact information for the local juvenile court and how to schedule his/her own hearing, and contact information for the local GAL program and local legal services agencies that provide free representation to foster youth.

Additionally, Florida should implement the recommendations of OPPAGA and ILAC regarding minimum IL service standards, oversight, and accountability. These recommendations include: DCF incorporating minimum IL service standards into CBC agency contracts; contractually requiring CBC agencies to standardize and report data on IL youth served; contractually requiring CBC agencies to include IL outcome information in their quality assurance data; and revising contract monitoring to assess CBC agencies' compliance with IL statutes and rules.

Further, Florida should examine successful IL initiatives established in individual districts and work to replicate those initiatives statewide. For example, there are two initiatives in Hillsborough County in Tampa that are cited in the ILAC 2006 report. The first is the creation of a transitioning foster youth division in juvenile court that focuses on the Independent Living needs of older foster youth and ensures that all older youth are brought to court to be heard and to participate in their Independent Living plan. The second is a program that not only provides IL training but also works to ensure that every foster youth is educated, housed, banked, employed, and connected to a permanent supportive family by age twenty-five.

Finally, Florida should increase state funding for Independent Living training and the Road to Independence program. It is widely reported, and confirmed by the ILAC 2006 and 2007 report, that annual funding is insufficient to accomplish the goals of the program. In addition to foster youth suffering because of insufficient Independent Living funding, society itself suffers due to the costs of increased homelessness, welfare dependency, incarceration, and institutionalization of former foster children who were never given the opportunity to become self-sufficient adults.

### **Promoting Adoption through the Black Faith-Based Community: "One Church, One Child"**

#### **Background**

Black children are overrepresented within the dependency system. Many of them languish within the system without ever being adopted. Any conversation about reforming Florida's foster care system must also address the need for more adoptive parents for Black children. Faith-based organizations are the oldest continuous institution in the Black community. They have survived years of slavery, Jim Crow segregation and the American Apartheid. Black theology has consistently utilized religious text as inspiration for social justice (liberation theology). Additionally, religious texts are full of examples of the need to care for abandoned children.

*James 1:26-27: "If someone thinks he is religious yet does not bridle his tongue, and so deceives his heart, his religion is futile. Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their misfortune and to keep oneself unstained by the world."*

*Koran:* “Did he not find thee an orphan, and hath he not taken care of thee? And did he not find thee wandering in error, and hath he not guided thee into the truth? And did he not find thee needy, and hath he not enriched thee? Wherefore oppress not the orphan; neither repulse the beggar: but declare the goodness of thy Lord.”

Stories like these appeal to the inner strength of the Black Religious Community.

### **Targeting Black Faith-based Organizations for Adoption in Florida today:**

Florida has 46,770 (2005-2006) youth in foster care and over 40 percent are Black. Black boys make up 20 percent of the youth in foster care. There is an enormous need for Blacks to be engaged in this crisis. The National Association of Black Social Workers has argued for years for culturally competent outreach methods to identify Black adoptive/foster parents. “Black families can be found when agencies alter their requirements, methods of approach, definition of suitable family and tackle the legal machinery to facilitate inter-state placements.” (National Association of Black Social Workers, “Position Statement on Trans-Racial Adoption,” September 1972).

The State of Florida has recognized the importance of partnering with Black clergy and their congregations. In 1990, the Legislature passed the One Church, One Child Corporation Act section 409.1755, Florida Statutes, under the sponsorship of Senator Carrie Meek and Representative Bill Clark. This action placed the program into state law and mandated its operation as a non-profit corporation with a board of directors appointed by the Governor. To carry out the intent and provisions of section 409.1755(3)(b)5, Florida Statutes, the program currently has a 31-member board of directors, which includes two members from each Department of Children and Families district, four from the region and one member-at-large. Board members serve a minimum three-year term. The current board was appointed/reappointed by Governor Jeb Bush in April 2005. One Church, One Child of Florida Corporation (OCOC) operates statewide as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, licensed child placing agency, in response to legislative mandate to privatize child welfare services.

During fiscal year 2006-2007, OCOC operated an office in Tallahassee which serves as the state headquarters, a co-located District 2 office and an office in District 9, West Palm Beach. Headquarters office staff includes an Executive Director, Program Manager, Public Information/Community Coordinator, Staff Assistant and volunteers. The District staff includes a Program Specialist/Coordinator and Adoption Recruiter/Trainer in each office.

OCOC works in partnership with faith-based organizations, local businesses, agencies and entities such as AARP, AmeriCorps, Daniel Memorial, Florida A and M University and Florida State University Social Work Programs, Florida Coalition for Children, Florida Baptist Children’s Home, Children’s Home Society and other Community Based Care Agencies and continues its partnership with the Department of Children and Families.

### **What has happened?**

Since OCOC’s initial inception in the Department of Children and Families in 1988 as an adoption support program, many changes have occurred, including decreases in its funding

decreases, program restructuring, privatization and eventually obtaining 501(c)(3) non-profit status. Although OCOC is licensed by the Department of Children and Families as a child placement agency, it has difficulty accessing the Community Based Care (CBC) network. (See Appendix E for more information on OCOC's last four fiscal years)

### **Recommendations**

“One Church, One Child” is a program that continues to be of critical need to children waiting for adoptive and foster families. Black children continue to be disproportionately over represented in the foster care system, and they continue to take longer to be adopted. OCOC takes a culturally competent approach to working with Black faith-based organizations and families in recruitment, approval, placement, retention and support, and it is the best means of engaging the religious community.

“One Church, One Child” currently has a very small administrative budget and needs to be restored to include headquarters administrative staff and service staff, office and support in each district/region to strengthen the work with its State Board, in recruiting, preparing and approving families for children in foster care in need of adoption service. Appropriately and adequately funding OCOC will allow the agency to work along side the community based care lead agencies and provide support in identifying families for waiting children, regular and child specific adoption recruitment.

# HEALTH

*“I’d like to erase disparity in health care.”*  
*Dr. Eddy Regnier, Council Member*

## **Committee on Improving Health Status**

**Dr. Eddy Regnier – Chair**

Mr. Walter McNeil

Dr. Eddy Regnier

Ms. Sybil Richard

Dr. Shairi Turner

Ms. Gladys Wilson

Ms. Tamara Demko

## HEALTH

Hundreds, if not thousands, of Black men across Florida die prematurely and needlessly because of a lack of access to quality health services. According to a study performed by the Smiley Group, Inc., The Covenant published in 2006 estimates that nationally 44 million Americans of all races are uninsured. Blacks and Native Americans are prevalent in this group of uninsured Americans. This study further states that Black men are less likely to qualify for publicly funded insurance since such programs are tied to women with dependent children. According to the United States, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Surgeon General's Report, nearly 25 percent of Blacks have no health coverage compared to about 16 percent of the U.S. population.

High disparity of health coverage is further compounded by low percentage of available minority health care providers in the state. According to the Florida Surgeon General, Blacks only account for a small percentage of doctors in Florida. The report indicated that Blacks accounts for 2 percent of psychiatrists and 2 percent of psychologists and only 3.3 percent of Blacks are physicians in the state. A study sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges points out the obvious and concludes that Black physicians are more likely to work with other similar ethnic minority groups in underserved communities and have more satisfied customers in those communities.

A study sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Kaiser Family Foundation, Race, Ethnicity and Health Care concluded that Black men have the shortest life expectancy and the highest mortality rate when compared to men from other racial and ethnic groups. Black men also have higher rates of hospitalization for complications from diabetes, hypertension, cancer and heart disease than White males. The same source indicated from data collected in 2004 that there were 24,000 preventable deaths from cardiovascular diseases and 22,000 deaths from diabetes. Data about the HIV epidemic collected by the Florida Department of Health, Bureau of HIV/AIDS in 2004 estimates Blacks accounted for 45 percent of AIDS cases among men and 66 percent among women. Blacks account for 50 percent of 81,972 total HIV/AIDS cases. The National Urban League, The State of Black America cites there were 4,700 needless Black infant deaths in the first year of life. According to Merrill, Ray M. and Otis W. Brawley, "Prostate Cancer Incidence and Mortality Rates among White and Black," Epidemiology, Volume 8 (Mar., 1997), the rate of prostate cancer in Black men is about 40 percent higher than it is for White men and the rate of mortality is almost doubled. They also argue further that fewer Black men survive to older age than Whites at every age specific interval. Collier, James (2007) blames this high mortality rate of Black men from prostate cancer on lack of vitamin D and state that Black men die at a much higher rate than other groups. These findings may indicate that Blacks fall behind the White population in every category except for suicide and liver disease.

The San Diego Black Health Associates, Health Disparities for Blacks (2007), outlined ten leading causes of death for Black males including cardiovascular disease, cancer, stroke, unintentional injuries, diabetes, homicide, HIV/AIDS related illness, respiratory disease, nephritis and influenza.

Inadequate nutrition is a critical factor in the health crisis in the Black community. Incorrect cultural beliefs, poor past experiences with the health care industry, and protracted distances between available treatment centers and Black communities all play a role in the poor diets which are so prevalent in the Black community. Even Blacks who have health insurance coverage have poor utilization records. Many succumb to misinformation about the need for prevention and early screening. A lack of trust in an essentially White dominated system causes them to avoid the medical system, often with terrible consequences.

High death rates from preventable disease leave many children to be raised by single mothers or other family members in substandard conditions. There is a strong correlation between poverty, poor education, inadequate health care and violence. Violence is concentrated in areas where there is poverty and poor educational achievements, Washington State Department of Health, "Race Ethnicity and Health Care, Homicide"; Russell Madden, "Poverty and Violence" (2007). Blacks are more likely than Whites to meet federal and state criteria for poverty. The true cost of the premature death rate among Black men from disease and violence is difficult to assess, but its impact on our state is clearly multi-dimensional.

Children without fathers frequently require state subsidized financial support in order to meet their most basic needs. Poor children who grow up with little parental involvement are significantly more likely to underachieve in school, use drugs and participate in gang activity. The Florida Department of Corrections manages approximately 89,766 inmates at a cost of \$20.19 per inmate per day. According to the US Department of Justice, "Drug War Facts, Race, Prison and Drug Laws," 53 percent of incarcerated men are Black, 19.93 percent are Hispanic and 25 percent are White. Black males are about two times more likely to die from homicides than White males.

### **Official Response**

A number of federal, state government organizations and private health agencies collect information about the health crisis in Florida. These governmental agencies and private organizations include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Public Health (DPH), The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), state universities, and private hospital system. However, there is no organizing body that seeks to combine data from these varied sources and integrate them into a user friendly form for public dissemination and use. Data about health problems from these various sources are available to well informed individual and professionals but are rarely available to the general public. This void creates a barrier for effective use of such data. An organization that focuses its efforts on collecting and organizing data about health risks and making that information available to the general public in user friendly format would be a significant help in achieving this Council's objectives of promoting public awareness about the health issues facing Black men and boys.



## **Mental Health and Violence**

Some of the mental health problems that confront Black men and boys are chronic depression, poor self-esteem, social isolation, family disorganization, poor anger management, violence, untreated learning disabilities and drug addiction (data obtained in 2007 from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, “Surgeon General’s Report”).

The Black community as a group largely avoids the mental health system. This is partly due to the lack of affordability of most quality mental health services. Since mental health services lack parity with medical health care, insurance benefits frequently exclude mental health coverage. While Black women will make use of traditional mental health treatment, Black men typically avoid such services, even when they can afford them. Some of the reasons Black men avoid seeking mental health treatment include societal beliefs that stigmatize those who are associated with mental health services. Some social circles deny that mental illness is a reality and define mental illness as a means to avoid responsibility. Association with mental health systems is believed to be an admission that one is crazy, morally weak and generally unfit. The consequence of avoidance is that Black men and boys suffer with treatable mental health problems which detrimentally affect their quality of life.

## **Drug Abuse within the Black Community**

Blacks are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system for drug-related criminal charges. Blacks are more likely to receive longer prison sentences than their White counterparts for similar drug offenses. The majority of Black males in prison are there because of drug-related offenses. Drug abuse and subsequent arrest and conviction result in high drop out rates, loss of driving privileges, unemployment, poverty, violence and even death. The Florida Legislature and the criminal justice system have invested more money in long-term incarceration for drug offenders (including non-violent ones) rather than treatment.

It is generally believed that treatment for mental health problems such as drug dependence only results in demonstrable abstinence for about 15 to 20 percent of those afflicted with the disorder. Others are managed over long periods of time with relapse and periodic return to drug abuse. It should be noted like most medical illnesses, mental health problems are managed like chronic conditions over a person’s life time. While medical treatment rate is essentially the same as it is for non-medical services such as drug abuse, mental health treatment is denigrated and labeled a failure. Only about 20 percent of all health-related diseases are treatable by current medical techniques, and 80 percent of health problems are handled as chronic health problems where symptoms are managed over time. The denigration of mental health services as failures should be changed to a more positive message. Only if mental health services are put on parity with medical treatment with effective public education can the stigma associated with receiving mental health treatment be decreased resulting in greater use.

## **Mental Health, Cultural Identity, Trauma and Cultural Impact**

For Black males, the legacy of slavery has meant full employment when work was without compensation and unemployment when labor resulted in financial compensation. Slavery also meant no attachment to family as sale of able-bodied males could be imminent. It is easy to see how slavery gave birth to a culture of violence against women and children. Poor self-worth, learned helplessness and historical post-traumatic stress may have led to acceptance of failure as a psychological fact. While the culture that was slavery has changed, some of the harms of this institution have survived to affect the lives of Black men and boys today.

There are effective educational models and treatment programs for teaching victims of historical trauma to process and overcome the destructive effects of the past. However, there appears to be little to no interest in educational dialogue and responsibility taking that could lead to healing and the emergence of an emotionally healthy Black minority. Mental health organizations, educational institutions and civic and religious institutions can take the lead to employ relevant trauma models on a broad scale to heal those Black males who experienced historical trauma.

### **Identifying Elements Associated with Successful Black Men and Boys**

Even during the worst of times, there are those Black men and boys who make successful adaptations and succeed even while surrounded by failure. While there is some overlap between the habits of successful White and Black males, there are differences. These differences and similarities need to be studied and findings applied in real settings. For example, is successful adaptation of Black boys simply dependent on having available a reliable and dependable Black male role model? Are substitutes such as Big Brothers or other similar programs effective? Funding for studying factors that contributes to resiliency among successful Black men and boys who come from diverse backgrounds should be conducted.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Due to complex interrelated issues, many Black men and boys are locked out of the benefits of the states health care system resulting in terrible consequences. Black Americans seem to lead the state in almost every negative indicator for poor health. Blacks account only for a small percentage of health care professionals in the state needed to respond to disparity of health care. Black men and boys have the highest mortality rates when compared to Whites for such medical problems as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, strokes and prostate cancers. Poor health among Black men and boys is likely caused by multiple factors that include poor access to good nutritional sources such as fresh fruit, poor timely access to hospitals, lack of knowledge about health and lack of adequate health coverage that is needed to pay for medical services. In addition, substance abuse is an epidemic among Black men and boys leading to violence, high mortality rates and high incarceration rates.

Recommendations to change these dismal facts require a high degree of commitment among government and public agencies. The state should invest in providing expanded third party health care coverage for both medical and mental health services for Black boys. Healthy Black children can result in increase school retention and less involvement in at risk behavior decreasing the states crime statistics. A public education campaign designed to promote the benefits of early screening and participation in health care services is also needed. This should include use of mass media, dissemination of information in public and private schools, as well as non-traditional systems such as mobile medical units.

Additionally, a state-wide policy of requiring medical and mental health treatment for non-violent offenders should be investigated. Such treatment should include court-ordered education about mental and medical health problems, vocational training and medical screening for known health risks for Black men and boys. Mental health services should be put in parity with medical treatment and funding provided for the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorder. We can begin to close the gap in health disparity between Blacks and Whites when government and private organizations begin to collaborate together to study the problem and share resources. Perhaps the state can provide incentives to encourage this collaboration between private and government organizations. Should such collaboration occur, then the entire state can benefit by increasing the healthy life expectancy for all of Floridians.

# Legislative Review

*“We are aware of the budget crisis but let us not fool ourselves into denying the human crisis that threatens the lives of our children and our society.”*

*Levi Williams, Council Chair.*

*“When a youngster is arrested [at school], what they are going to do is issue a citation instead of giving them an arrest record, because it will ruin their futures forever. They used to call it acting-out; now they’re criminals.”*

*Senator Frederica Wilson, Council Member*

*“This initiative is an important step toward resolving many of the issues facing Black males statewide. Therefore, our efforts will need to be successful*

*For years to come”*

*Representative Frank Peterman, Council Member*

## **Committee on Legislative Review**

**Representative Frank Peterman – Chair**

Dr. Billy Close

Mr. Christopher Norwood

Dr. Eddy Regnier

Rev. Dr. Albert Simpson Jr.

Senator Frederica Wilson

Senator Stephen Wise

## **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

We are at a critical point in Florida. The state's goals for economic development, social growth and cultural advancement are impressive. Additional legislative steps are now required to address the problems facing Black males and boys, including a legislative plan with specific initiatives that requires statutory change, an appropriation or both. The Council is aware of the budget crisis the State of Florida is facing. However, to do nothing would be to continue to allow the underlying conditions negatively affecting Black men and boys to exist. If funding is invested in preventative measures, it will allow the state to reap the benefits and rewards generated by individuals, who through education reform and opportunities, will be equipped with the tools to be contributors to our economy.

One needs only to ask "what is the cost of incarceration as opposed to a college education?" It makes economic sense, for all Floridians, to fund efforts to improve the lives of Black men and boys. With the above in mind, the Council respectfully submits this proposed blueprint for legislative action to address the issues critical to improving the status of Black men and boys.

### **Recommendations**

1. Appropriate \$250,000 for the Council for fiscal year 2008-09, including the hiring of an Executive Director (FTE with full benefits).
2. Reestablish the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force (Governor Bush's original task force sunsetted in January 2007).
3. Fund the creation of a Black male policy institute.
4. Support the study and recommendations of the Department of Juvenile Justice's Blueprint Commission.
5. Develop a community-based initiative to educate the Black community on the laws and process involved in getting records sealed/expunged.
6. Require the following information to be reported to FDLE whenever a law enforcement officer fatally shoots a suspect within the course of their law enforcement duties:
  - gender of suspect,
  - race of suspect,
  - age of suspect,
  - location of shooting,
  - agency or agencies involved,
  - gender and race of the officer or officers involved,
  - whether the suspect was armed,

- a summary of the circumstances and events leading up to the shooting, including the reason for law enforcement intervention,
  - who investigated the agency action, and
  - whether any disciplinary action was taken against the officer or officers involved.
7. Promote legislation prohibiting the practice by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement of selling arrest records of non-convicted individuals, databases of fingerprints or criminal records of juveniles.
  8. Require a study by the appropriate agencies of the number of Black men in prison compared to Black men enrolled in postsecondary education.

# Appendix A

## Council Member Biographies



**Mr. Levi Williams**  
**Chair**

Levi Williams was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1968, and immigrated to the United States at the age of seven. He graduated from the University of Illinois with his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in marketing and organizational behavior, and later received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida.

In 2007, Attorney General Bill McCollum appointed Mr. Williams to serve as his designee to the Council. Mr. Williams was subsequently elected as the Council's inaugural Chair by the members.



**Christopher Norwood**  
**Vice Chair**  
**Director, Lawyers For Children America**

Inspired to work in public service while attending Hampton University and working for the City of Hampton Youth Services Commission, Mr. Norwood learned the impact government and public policy have on the lives of children. After completing his degree in Social Work/Community Organization at Hampton, he went on to Graduate School at Cornell University's Institute for Public Affairs (MPA). Mr. Norwood is a 2002 graduate of St. Thomas University Law School. Since then, Mr. Norwood has worked with various human service non-profit agencies in management and public policy advocacy. In 2007, the Speaker of the Florida House appointed him to serve on this Council.



**Torey L. Alston**  
**Director**  
**Office of Supplier Diversity**  
**Department of Management Services**

Torey L. Alston, a native of Fort Lauderdale, currently serves as the Director for the Office of Supplier Diversity, State of Florida Department of Management Services which works to connect minority vendors with business opportunities in Florida. Mr. Alston was previously selected as a Gubernatorial Fellow serving under both Governor Crist and former Governor Bush, while at that same time completing his MBA degree. Before serving as a Gubernatorial Fellow, he was in the Communications Department in the Executive Office of the Governor.



**Billy R. Close, Ph.D.**  
**Florida State University**  
**College of Criminology and Criminal Justice**

Currently an Assistant Professor in the College of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida State University, Dr. Billy Close is also the President of Paradigm Consultants and Associates, Inc. and Beyond the Athlete, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dr. Close also served as both the Assistant and Acting Director of the FSU Black Studies Program, Co-Principal Investigator and Director for the Brotherhood of Pride Academy for Young Black Males, and Research Consultant to the Racial and Ethnic Bias Study Commission for the Florida Supreme Court.



**Ms. Tamara Yang Demko, J.D.**  
**Assistant Deputy Secretary**  
**Department of Health**

Tamara Yang Demko serves as the Assistant Deputy Secretary for Health at the Florida Department of Health, and also fulfills the statutory role of Florida's Officer of Women's Health



Strategy. In her position at the Florida Department of Health, Ms. Demko assists in the administration of various divisions and programs, including the Office of Minority Health, the Division of Family Health Services, the Division of Emergency Medical Operations, the Division of Disease Control, the Division of Environmental Health, the Office of Public Health Research, the Bureau of Laboratories, and the Bureau of Statewide Pharmaceutical Services.



**Mr. William James**  
**President and CEO**  
**CandC International Computers and Consultants, Inc.**

As the founder and driving force behind CandC International Computers and Consultants, Inc. (CandC International), Bill James provides the leadership that has made CandC International a success. Mr. James has over 20 years of sales and marketing experience in computer technology with industry leaders Dell, Xerox, Epson and Control Data Corporation. Mr. James has received the Florida Small Business of the Year Award, Broward County's Outstanding Business of the Year and the 2001 Small Business of the Year Award from the *South Florida Business Journal*.



**Ms. Lillian Lima**  
**Department of Children and Families**  
**Special Projects Coordinator of Youth Initiatives**

Appointed to the Council by Secretary Bob Butterworth, Lillian Lima serves as the Special Projects Coordinator of Youth Development Initiatives for youth aging out of Foster Care at the Florida Department of Children and Families. Ms. Lima previously served over seven years as the Education Special Projects Coordinator of Educational and Mentoring Initiatives under Crime Prevention and Victim Services Programs for the Florida Attorney General's Office under both Bob Butterworth and Charlie Crist.

Ms. Lima holds a Master's degree in Management with concentration in Leadership & Development, and a Bachelor's degree in Communications. A veteran of the United States Coast Guard, she received the Commandant's Letter of Achievement during her five years of service.



**Anthony McCoy, Ph.D.**  
**Department of Children and Families**  
**Statewide Forensic Treatment Coordinator**

Tony McCoy is the Statewide Forensic Treatment Coordinator for the Department of Children and Families. Dr. McCoy studied clinical psychology, psychology-law and statistics at the University of Alabama, and earned a doctor of philosophy degree in 1989.



**Walter McNeil**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Juvenile Justice**

Secretary Walter McNeil has devoted his time not only to the Tallahassee community, but also to the safety and well being of children. He is married to Gloria and father to three children: Tara, Mackey, & Victoria.

Mr. McNeil has a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice from St. Johns University in Springfield, Louisiana. He also began his graduate work in Criminal Justice at the University of Virginia and has a Bachelor of Science Degree from University of Southern Mississippi. In addition, his extensive education also includes completion of the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy, Florida Criminal Justice Chief Executive Institute, U.S. Department of Justice Executive Management Development Program, and Unisys Corporation Managing People.



**The Honorable Frank Peterman**  
**Representative, District 55**

Frank Peterman, Jr. was elected to the Florida House in 2000. He currently serves as the Democratic Ranking Member for the Committee on Juvenile Justice and the Director of Development for Juvenile Services Programs of St. Petersburg. Additionally, Representative

Peterman serves on the Committee on Economic Development, the Legislative Budget Commission and the Safety and Security Council.



**Mr. David Pridgen**  
**Deputy Secretary for Institutions**  
**Department of Corrections**

David Pridgen is a senior-level executive with 34-years of broad, in-depth experience in managing operations and programs at the institutional, regional and administrative levels. Mr. Pridgen began his career with the Department of Corrections in 1973, at Union Correctional Institution as a Classification Specialist, and was appointed to the position of Warden in 1997. In 2001, he was appointed to the position of Deputy Director of Institutional Programs.



**Eddy M. Regnier, Ph.D.**  
**Florida Licensed Clinical Psychologist**  
**Assessment and Psychotherapy Services**

Dr. Eddy Regnier, born in Porte Au Prince, Haiti, is an Associate Professor of the Sarasota School of Professional Psychology and Behavioral Sciences for Argosy University at Sarasota. Dr. Regnier has worked in the community by serving on various boards and is a practicing alumni member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Dr. Regnier is a member of the American Psychology Association and the Florida Psychology Association, and is also listed in the National Register of Health Service Providers.



**Ms. Sybil Richard**  
**Assistant Deputy Secretary**  
**Agency for Health Care Administration**

Sybil Richard is the Assistant Deputy Secretary for Florida Medicaid Operations, an \$11.2 billion program with 2.1 million beneficiaries and thousands of providers. Ms. Richard's responsibilities include the bureaus of Medicaid Pharmacy, Medicaid Services and Health Systems Development, as well as the eleven field offices throughout the state.



**The Honorable Julio Robaina**  
**Representative, District 117**

Born in Miami and raised in the City of South Miami, Julio Robaina was first elected to the Florida House in 2002. He has been employed with BellSouth for over 26 years, servicing the citizens of Miami-Dade County. Running unopposed, Representative Robaina was re-elected in 2004 and again in 2006. He is currently the Chair of the Committee on Urban and Local Affairs and also serves on the Committee on Health Quality and the Government Efficiency and Accountability Council.



**Rev. Albert Simpson, Jr., Ph.D.**  
**Philemon Missionary Baptist Church**

Dr. Albert Simpson, Jr. is an experienced pastor skilled in pastoral counseling, conflict resolution, marriage counseling, critical incident stress management, domestic violence intervention, professional ethics and executive leadership training. Dr. Simpson also serves as an advisor to Florida State Senator Stephen R. Wise and is the founder of The Share, Care, and Dare Development Program, Inc., and the Philemon Evangelistic Outreach Ministries Bible Institute. Dr. Simpson received his doctorate of philosophy in counseling from Suffield University.



**Eric Smith, Ph.D**  
**Commissioner**  
**Florida Department of Education**

Eric Smith began his career in Florida more than 30 years ago as a classroom teacher. His commitment to affecting positive change in the field of education led him to several administrative positions in Florida school districts and eventually to 16 years of serving as a district superintendent in Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland.

Mr. Smith received his undergraduate degree from Colorado State University, his master's degree in school administration from the University of Central Florida, and his doctorate of curriculum and instruction from the University of Florida.



**Dr. Shairi Turner**  
**Chief Medical Director**  
**Office of Health Services**  
**Department of Juvenile Justice**

Dr. Shairi Turner is an Internist and a Pediatrician. In 2005, she was named the first Chief Medical Director in the eleven-year history of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Dr. Turner directs the Office of Health Services and is responsible for the oversight of the medical, mental health and substance abuse services for nearly 8,000 youth.



**The Honorable Frederica Wilson**  
**Florida Senate, District 33**

Frederica Wilson was elected to the Senate in 2002. She serves as 2007 Chair of the Miami-Dade County Legislative Delegation and was elected Minority Leader Pro Tempore of the

Florida Senate. Senator Wilson is the founder and Executive Director of the nationally recognized 5,000 Role Models of Excellence Project, a mentoring program for Black boys and men. Launched 15 years ago, the program is currently operating in more than 150 Miami-Dade County, Pinellas County and Duval County Public Schools.



**The Honorable Stephen R. Wise**  
**Florida Senate, District 5**

Stephen R. Wise obtained his Bachelor's Degree from Florida Southern College in 1963. He received his Masters' degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 1968, and his Doctorate from the University of Alabama in 1970. He was elected to the Florida Senate in 2001. Representative Wise was recently appointed to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Standing Committee on Legislative Effectiveness and State Government, and the Education Commission of the States (ECS).

**Staff:**

Rick Nuss

Bureau Chief, Criminal Justice Programs

Fredrica Doctor

Research and Training Specialist

Michael Coard

Administrative Assistant

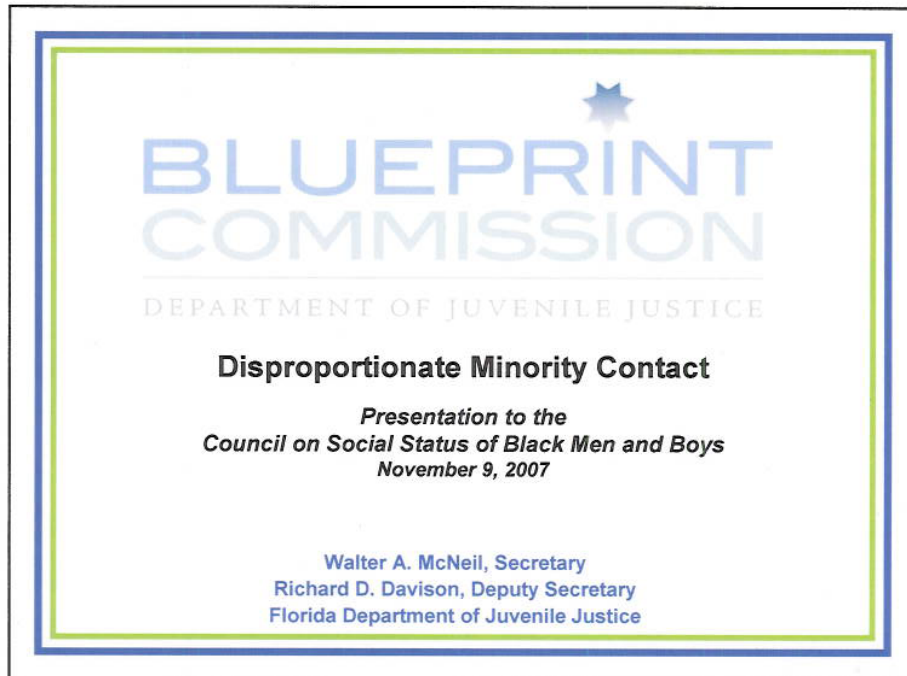
**Legal Staff:**

Carly A. Hermanson

Assistant Attorney General

# Appendix B

## Blueprint Commission





## Vision Statement

The children and families of Florida will live in safe, nurturing communities that provide for their needs, recognize their strengths and support their success.



## Mission Statement

To increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.



Blueprint Commission  
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

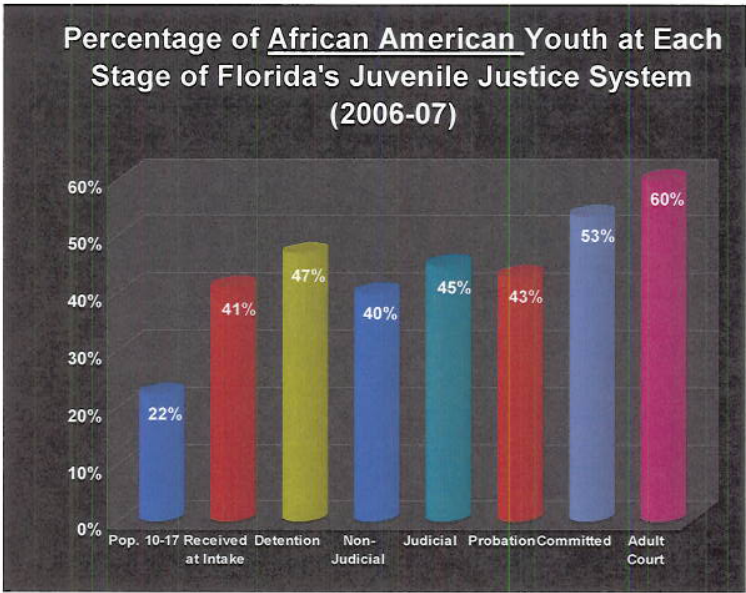
Overview:

A time-limited, appointed group of 25 private and public stakeholders, citizen leaders, policy experts and advocates, to assist the Department of Juvenile Justice in developing recommendations for a comprehensive strategic plan to improve the lives of at-risk youth while ensuring public safety.

Blueprint Commission  
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

**Broad Goals:**

1. Ensure Public Safety
2. Improve Outcomes for Youth in System
3. Ensure a Fair and Balanced Approach
4. Strengthen Youth, Families and Communities
5. Strengthen School and Community Collaborations
6. Transform large institutional care to community-based residential models
7. Ensure an Effective and Accountable System



Percentage of African American Youth at each stage 2006-2007

Draft Recommendations from the  
Blueprint Commission addressing DMC

## Civil Citation

### Recommendation:

The Legislature should modify the Florida Statutes, to require alternatives to the formal arrest, intake and the adjudicatory process. This would allow the issuance of civil citations, community-based and home-based alternatives to be considered as an option for first-time, misdemeanor offenders.

### Rationale:

- Increase in juvenile incarceration rates impacted by the over-use of zero tolerance policies by school districts and arrests for non-serious offenses by law enforcement.
- In 2006-2007, 70,000 of Florida's 145,000 juvenile referrals were misdemeanor offenses.
- Approximately 25,000 of those were direct referrals from schools.

## Comprehensive Assessments

### Recommendation:

Every circuit shall have a full Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) based on a model that includes:

- \* Substance abuse and mental health screening
  - \* Comprehensive assessments with follow-up services
  - \* Detention screening and intake services
  - \* Educational assessments
  - \* Community-risk assessments
  - \* Transportation services
  - \* Security services
  - \* Health services
- A formal diversion program using a community-based intervention or treatment service shall be available for children.
  - Youth under 13 arrested on drug charges shall be diverted from formal arrest processing into alternative services
  - Youth 13 and older arrested on drug possession charges not related to sale, delivery or trafficking shall be diverted.

## Disproportionate Minority Contact Taskforce

### Recommendation:

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice shall create a Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) task force with representation from education, law enforcement, state attorney, public defender, judiciary, community of faith, providers, advocacy organizations, members from communities most affected, and other stakeholders, to reduce DMC

The DMC task force will charge local juvenile justice boards and councils with the responsibility to develop a DMC reduction plan for their area.

### Rationale:

- Nearly 7 of 10 youth in secure confinement are minority juveniles
- Florida has one of the highest percentages of African-American juveniles over-represented at every stage of the juvenile justice system.
- More concentration on funding prevention initiatives that target diverting at-risk minority and specifically African-American youth from the formal juvenile justice court process.

## Domestic Violence

### Recommendation:

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice will work with key stakeholders, local law enforcement agencies, and victim advocate organizations to prevent children in contact with law enforcement from being arrested for domestic violence charges by allowing for use of alternatives to arrest, such as placement in CINS/FINS shelters or other respite care, when appropriate for family and community safety.

### Rationale:

- Of the 10,276 referrals for domestic violence during FY 2006-07, 4,455 (43%) were for youth with no prior referrals.
- 80% of youth referred, and who have no prior referrals, were charged with misdemeanors.
- 2,107 youth with no prior referrals were held in secure detention.
- Link between victimization and delinquency appears to be one of primary pathways leading to arrest and subsequent commitment, especially for girls.
- Providing viable options to arrest such as respite care with ongoing family interventions, could reduce the number of youth referred and committed to the juvenile justice system and help preserve the unity and integrity of the family.

## Accessing Care

### Recommendation:

The Department shall conduct a statewide campaign, on a continuing basis, in conjunction with DOE, DCF, and local information and referral networks, to raise awareness and accessibility of Prevention and Early Intervention Services available to help families and children.

### Rationale:

- In addition to protecting the public from acts of delinquency, state policy to develop and implement effective methods of preventing and reducing acts of delinquency, with a focus on maintaining and strengthening the family as a whole so that children may remain in their homes or communities.
- State's policy to address the problems of families in need of services (FINS) by providing them with an array of services designed to preserve the unity and integrity of the family and to emphasize parental responsibility for the behavior of their children.
- The child-rearing practices, attitudes, values and behaviors of parents influence their children's success. Families play a key role in the healthy development of their children.

## Zero Tolerance

### Recommendation:

The Department of Education, School Superintendents and Department of Juvenile Justice staff should partner to review and amend K-12 zero tolerance policies and practices to eliminate the referral of youth to DJJ for misdemeanor offenses.

### Rationale:

- During FY 2005-06, 25,708 youth or 17% of the referrals were school related. A misdemeanor was the most serious charge for 64% of the referrals (16,453).
- Youth referred from schools accounted for 21% of all youth referred to DJJ.
- Weapons and drug related offenses accounted to 24% of school referrals.
- Suspensions and academic failure are strong predictors of entry into the criminal justice system, especially for African-American males.

## Progressive Response System

### Recommendation:

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, in collaboration with providers, Juvenile Justice Circuit Boards and County Councils and other key stakeholders, should establish a progressive response system to prevent children from entering the juvenile justice system and ensure that children are served in the least restrictive environment.

### Rationale:

- 2006-07 : 70,000 of Florida's 145,000 juvenile referrals were for misdemeanor offenses. Many contributing factors:
  - \* Over-use of zero tolerance
  - \* Arrests for non-serious offenses by law enforcement
  - \* Lack of community-based alternatives for children needing health, mental health and substance abuse services
- DJJ is responsible for developing and coordinating comprehensive services and programs for the prevention, early intervention and treatment of delinquent behavior.

## Service Areas

### Recommendation:

The Department shall identify "service areas" that promote the concept of community-based programs while recognizing the unique characteristics of Florida's communities, and will recommend implementation to the Legislature. Adoption of the DCF service area boundaries shall receive careful consideration.

A full continuum of services that include, but are not limited to, prevention, early intervention, supervision and support services in the family, probation, residential, and aftercare will be available in each service area.

### Rationale:

- Florida's communities have much to offer DJJ-involved youth and their families
- Placement of a youth far away from home community weakens community linkages that can assist the youth.
- Defining service areas near the youth's home will promote the provision of necessary services

Each child is an  
adventure into a better  
life -- an opportunity to  
change the old pattern  
and make it new.

Hubert H. Humphrey



# Appendix C

**Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force**

GOVERNOR'S EX-OFFENDER TASK FORCE

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Vicki Lopez Lukis, Chairman

Final Report to the Governor

November 2006



## Executive Summary of the Task Force's Recommendations

**ALMOST NINETY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE NOW IN FLORIDA'S PRISONS WILL ONE DAY BE RELEASED.** Within three years of release, over a quarter of those people will go back to prison for a new crime. This rate of recidivism is unacceptably high and unacceptably expensive. For each new crime, there is a new victim, and new costs to Florida communities. This trend must be reversed.

This Executive Summary distills the recommendations that have been unanimously adopted by the Task Force, each of which is designed to address this problem and make our communities safer.

The recommendations reflect a paradigm shift from what we once expected from the correctional system and what we and others across the country are coming to expect of it. We cannot continue to release people from prison who are unprepared to return home and succeed in living a crime-free life. And we cannot continue to fail our communities by leaving them unprepared to help them succeed.

The recommendations are arranged in three categories: Recommendations related to the state's prison system; recommendations related to reentry at the community level; and recommendations related to continuing the work of reform in 2007 and beyond.

The recommendations that are italicized and in bold print are the Task Force's highest priorities.

The Task Force embraces the Florida Department of Corrections' (FDC) new commitment to reducing recidivism and recognizes that a good deal of money can be saved by achieving this goal. Still, the Task Force acknowledges that making this commitment is not, at the start, a budget neutral proposition. Thus, some of its recommendations are made with the understanding that they will require the reallocation and reinvestment of state resources, and present opportunities to invest additional resources.

**I. The Prison Experience:  
Successful Reentry Must Start at Prison Entry**

1. *The FDC mission statement should be revised to explicitly address successful reentry. To assess performance in achieving the goal of successful reentry, performance measures should be adopted for FDC, its facilities, and wardens and staff.*
2. *A minimum of six more facilities should be transformed into faith and character-based facilities with three completed by December 31, 2007 and three more by December 31, 2008.*
3. FDC should use a validated instrument for evaluation and assessment at reception for both security classification and reentry programming needs and develop an inmate program handbook describing available FDC inmate programs, and the rules and guidelines governing selection and eligibility and termination from programs.
4. FDC's capacity for basic and functional literacy, GED preparedness and vocational education should be expanded.
5. FDC's capacity for the treatment of substance abuse and of co-occurring disorders should be expanded.
6. *FDC should improve and expand job training through the maximization of third-party resources.*
7. FDC should help inmates increase family contact and reduce financial strain on inmates' families.
8. FDC should expand work release by outsourcing additional work release facilities.
9. *FDC should begin pre-release planning with inmates starting on their first day of incarceration and develop individualized reentry plan for each inmates, and:*
  - *Assist inmates being released from prison in obtaining Social Security cards and state identification cards or drivers licenses.*
  - *Assist disabled inmates in applying for disability and Medicaid benefits prior to their release.*
  - *Develop an inmate discharge handbook that contains the inmate's individualized reentry plan and the programs and services available in his home community.*
10. FDC should transform existing facilities in the communities to which the most inmates will be released into transition release centers that comprehensively prepare inmates for release; and as prisoners near the end of their sentence, FDC should transfer prisoners to facilities close to their homes.

## II. Coming home: Reentry at the Community Level

11. *The State should create a "transition authority" that coordinates a seamless planning process and a continuum of services from FDC custody to the community to facilitate the successful reentry of people leaving FDC custody; it would develop policies and interagency agreements that spell out the roles of state agencies in this process and help coordinate the work of reentry at the community level.*
12. *The State should support the development and work of reentry at the community level to help local reentry planning and service delivery, test new ideas and approaches, and promote and replicate what is found to work in producing measurable outcomes, such as reduced recidivism, by:*
  - *Partnering and collaborating with Florida communities in the development of local reentry councils to coordinate reentry planning and services at the local level.*
  - *The Governor's Office appointing a reentry point-person charged with coordinating, with the transition authority and relevant state agencies, the continuum of services from FDC facilities through release to the community.*
13. *The Legislature should prohibit the requirement that one have their civil rights restored as a condition for employment or licensing and instead create a single background check law, such as Chapter 435, with lists of disqualifying offenses relevant to the occupation, license or place of employment.*

## III. Organizing Reentry Reform Work in 2007 and Beyond

14. *The Legislature or Governor should re-commission the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force to continue the work it began in 2005.*
15. *The re-commissioned Task Force should study critical populations such as sex offenders female, juvenile and mentally ill inmates and ex-offenders and additional issues such as community supervision, graduated sanctions, the loss of civil rights upon conviction of a felony, and the over-representation of African Americans among the inmate population with the aim of additional reform recommendations.*

# Appendix D

## **“One Church, One Child” (OCOC) Past Fiscal Years**

### **FY 2004-2005**

In addition to the administrative contract with the central office, the District 7 board members were able to get a contract with the local district before the local Community Based Care (CBC) Networks were selected. Service staff was hired to deliver adoption and related services including recruitment, training and approval of adoptive families, post-placement supervision and child recruitment development plans for children who were in need of adoption placements, but were later laid off due to lack of a continued service contract within the private network.

### **For FY 2005-2006**

In addition to the administrative contract with the central office, the Board received \$100,000 non-recurring funding from the Legislature, which was used to hire adoption service staff in Districts 2 and 9.

### **For FY 2006-2007**

OCOC continued in its attempt to provide adoption support services for the children in foster care in need of adoptive homes. Headquarters staff provided support to the Board administratively in statewide outreach and service. The appointed state board members along with local advisory committee members (volunteers from local district communities) worked to recruit families for adoption (foster care families are identified in this recruitment process). The two District 2 staff members and certified volunteer and the two District 9 staff members provided the parent preparation training Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) for families recruited across the state by board members. They completed the adoption home studies, worked to identify placements for children where possible and supported families beyond adoption finalization. The District 2 staffs provided services for families in the upper half of the state from Pensacola to Gainesville and the District 9 staffs provide services for families from Orlando to Key West to the extent possible.

OCOC's budget to support the operation included \$268,714 Administrative funds from DCF Central Office which supported the Headquarters. The Board worked to raise private funds and OCOC billed agencies for adoption placements (based on an established service fee) to help support four unfunded district staff, who provided the front-line service work with families. One Church, One Child worked with approximately 57 prospective adoptive families. This fiscal year 13 children were placed and/or identified for placement (See OCOC Annual Report).

### **For FY 2007-2008**

Under the new Department of Children and Families administration, OCOC Headquarters office continues to be funded at \$268,715. An additional \$150,000 was allotted to fund an Adoption Recruitment Pilot Project for OCOC. Under the pilot, one staff per location was hired

to work in Jacksonville and Tampa. Offices were identified in faith-based organizations in each location to house the staff. The new staff members work in partnership with the local community-based lead agent and the Department of Children and Families zones representative. One Church, One Child's performance goal is to recruit a total of 36 prospective adoptive families to refer to the local community based lead agency for adoption training, preparation and approval.

# Appendix E

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# Appendix F

## Council Opportunities

Senator Frederica Wilson proposed an introduction of a resolution in the Legislature to provide for counties to voluntarily create their own Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys to assist in achieving the goals and priorities of the Florida Council.

Former Council member, Representative Jennifer Carroll, recommended, and it was adopted, that the Council identify cities throughout Florida in which to have community meetings to present the Council, seek input on the applicable issues, seek suggested recommendations for consideration, and to garner support for the Council's mission and recommendations.

The Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys participated in the 22nd Annual Preventing Crime in the Black Community Conference in Orlando, Florida in May 2007.

Chairman Levi Williams and Senator Frederica Wilson made a guest appearance on WPBT Channel 2's *Issues*. The program was devoted to discussing the problems facing Black males and what can be done to solve these problems.

On behalf of the Council, Vice Chair Christopher Norwood participated in Congressional Black Caucus Conference held in Washington, D.C., in September 2007.

Billy R. Close, Ph.D., Chair of the Improving Educational Outcomes Committee, participated in the Eighth Annual Black Males National "Investing in the Black Male: Empowerment through Education" conference in October 2007 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Chairman Williams is one of five honorees this year at the Leadership Broward Foundation's 22nd Annual *Profiles in Leadership Dinner and Dance* because of his dedication to issues affecting youth and minorities of Broward County.

# Appendix G

## **Speakers at the Council's August and November meetings**

### ***August 30, 2007 site meeting hosted by Broward Community College***

Fred Spence, Team Success  
Edwin Collins,  
Rubin Young (Black Community of America, Inc.),  
David L. Fleming (Road Care Plus, Inc.),  
Desmond Meade (C.O.R.E.),  
Ernestine Price (Broward Sheriff's Office),  
Carlos J. Martinez (Public Defender's Office),  
Marguerite Luster (Liberty Park Community Association),  
Horace Turnbull (The South Florida Boys Choir),  
Newton Sanon (OIC of Broward County), and  
Billy Holcombe.

### ***November 9, 2007 site meeting hosted by Jacksonville Police Athletic League***

Joe Henry,  
Representative Audrey Gibson,  
Glenn Ellison,  
Albert Jordan Jr. (Royal Mentoring Group Center),  
Linda Lanier (Jacksonville Children's Commission),  
Robert Flowers (Duval County Black Democratic Caucus),  
Christopher Priester (Building Foundation),  
Kevin Gay (Operation New Hope),  
Derek Bermudez (HenBer, Better Boys Inc.),  
Sharon Wiley (Holden Heights Front Porch),  
Hobson M. Bethune (Master Gunn's Books and Basketball),  
Betty Burgeu (Duval County School Board),  
Lt. Bobby L. Deal,  
Director Mike Edwards, and  
Chief Assistant State Attorney Jay Plotkin

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Paul Perone

Rivka Spiro

Ruthie Williams

Rick Leffel

Jennifer Lewis

Larry Wagner

Carol Salisbury

Florida Memorial School of Social Work

Tommy Mitchell

Dan Gilmore

John Fazio

Tim Osborne



**Florida Council on the Social Status  
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