The Bay Area Young Men of Color Employment Partnership (BAYEP)
Bay Area Council, LeadersUp, Urban Strategies Council, PolicyLink, United Way of the Bay

Overview
The Bay Area Young Men of Color Employment Partnership (BAYEP) offers a regional strategy to engage businesses in hiring and retaining young men of color (YMoC) by addressing the unique barriers this underrepresented pool of talent faces throughout their path to middle skills work. BAYEP convenes businesses, community based organizations, on-the-ground training providers, researchers, and systems change advocates to create a broad continuum of support for both the individual and the engaged company. The BAYEP model focuses on meeting current and future workforce needs, while building middle-skill career pathways within companies to move YMoC up from initial entry level jobs. BAYEP moves the needle by working directly with employers to identify, address, and bridge talent needs; shift business practices and perceptions to hire, retain and grow YMoC talent; and elevate employer champions who understand that hiring YMoC talent is more than just social responsibility, but is also a business imperative.

Regional Challenge
Nationwide, young men of color are more often born into systemic poverty, are more likely to become high school dropouts, have unemployment rates higher than their peers, and vastly disproportionate rates of incarceration. In the Bay Area, one out of nine YMoC are unemployed and not in school, resulting in a $350 million estimated annual taxpayer burden and social service cost. Meanwhile, between 1980 and 2010, the share of people of color in the Bay Area increased from 34% to 58% and these numbers are growing. Clearly, a huge portion of our population is being left out of our regional economy.

At the same time, nearly half of U.S. employers report difficulty filling jobs and believe that their talent shortages have a high impact on their ability to meet their consumer’s needs and to stay competitive in a global marketplace. It is both a social and economic imperative to create a strategy around engaging YMoC in the Bay Area’s vibrant economy.

Many employers are motivated to launch company diversity and inclusion efforts, but often without a venue to actualize the intended outcomes. There is a need for a regional, sustainable, and scalable model to assist companies in meeting diversity and inclusion needs in the Bay Area. By committing to a comprehensive strategy around hiring and retaining YMoC in a deeply-rooted way, Bay Area employers have the opportunity to meet growing workforce needs and strengthen our robust economy.

Stewardship Approach to Engagement
The partnership’s core includes Bay Area Council, LeadersUp, Urban Strategies Council, PolicyLink, and United Way of the Bay, Area but leverages every organization’s relationships with community leaders, elected officials, businesses, and community based service providers. BAYEP convenes businesses, community based organizations, on-the-ground training providers, researchers, and systems change advocates to create a broad continuum of support for both the youth participant and the engaged company.

Solution
Unlike other workforce development efforts, BAYEP moves the needle by putting current and future workforce needs front and center. We work directly with employers to identify, address, and bridge talent needs, backward-engineering training modules with the job in mind. BAYEP also focuses on shifting business practices and perceptions around the hiring and retention of YMoC by helping to build middle-
skill career pathways within companies to move YMoC up from initial entry level jobs. BAYEP has worked with 36 employers thus far, including AT&T, BART, Comcast, Kaiser, Macy’s, Pepsi, SF Giants, Starbucks, and many others. Over the past year, BAYEP has successfully served 1,159 young people and connected 377 to employment.

**Key Strategies**
In July 2016, BAYEP partnered with the national My Brother’s Keeper Alliance to organize the Invest in Youth: Boys and Men of Color Career Summit in Oakland. At this transformational event, 355 youth received job offers on the spot and 929 youth received career development services. Mayor Libby Schaaf, U.S. Secretary of Education John King, Jr., Assistant to President Obama and Cabinet Secretary Broderick Johnson, California Endowment CEO Bob Ross, and Kaiser Permanente CEO Bernard Tyson were just some of the leaders in attendance who spoke about the need to expand opportunity for YMoC. Based on its huge success, BAYEP plans to replicate last year’s BMOC Career Summit on October 17th in Oakland. This summit will serve as the spark to our long term effort, the first step in the BAYEP journey to middle skill career pathways. Post-summit, BAYEP will be working with the youth and employers for 12-18 months to ensure that participants are being upskilled to advance to middle skill sustainable wage positions within companies.

BAYEP is also characterized by constant research and program evaluation. Looking at the various entities and groups that YMoC engage with along their career pathway, the employer, talent development partner, and public sector, BAYEP digs deep into the hypothesized barriers YMoC face and analyzes how we can all be doing better to improve outcomes for this population.

**Key Collaborations**
The partnership’s core includes Bay Area Council, LeadersUp, Urban Strategies Council, PolicyLink, and United Way of the Bay Area. The partnership also works with a number of community based talent development partners and regional employers. Thus far, NFL star Ronnie Lott, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, KTVU Anchor Dave Clark and United Way of the Bay Area COO Eric McDonnell have all joined our honorary committee.

**Results**
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**Role of Stewards**
The role of Stewards is to help inform and amplify this work. There are ample opportunities for scaling and replicating this program. First, BAYEP can be scaled in the Bay Area to expand across additional employers. Second, the findings of BAYEP will inform and catalyze change in the way we address YMoC workforce barriers. Finally, the partnership, which leverages various organizations’ expertise and relationships can be replicated in other regions by other partnerships that include a community based organization, innovative service provider, and business community liaison.

For more information contact:
Rachele Trigueros, Bay Area Council
Email: rtrigueros@bayareacouncil.org
Phone: (415) 946-8782