



ANNUAL REPORT 2015



FLORIDA COUNCIL ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS



A MESSAGE FROM OUR ATTORNEY GENERAL

In 2006, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys to study conditions affecting black males in our state. Administratively, the Council is housed in the Office of the Attorney General and has a 19-member board led by Dr. Eddy Regnier, APS Healthcare, Sarasota, Florida.

It is my privilege to present to you the Council's 2015 Annual Report. This report highlights the Council's accomplishments and the importance of its work and effect on Florida. The Council has concentrated its efforts on developing programs and services based on sound practices that will improve the lives of black males in our state.

The Council's vision is to commit to engaging, educating, equipping and encouraging black males to achieve their full potential. It is the Council's hope that this report will bring awareness to Florida citizens and leaders; and will encourage community partnerships to model effective programs and best practices that will have a positive effect on the lives of black males in this state.

I appreciate the tremendous effort that each member has contributed. I urge policy makers, community-based organizations and local government officials to support the important work of the Council.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Pam Bondi in black ink.

Pam Bondi

Attorney General



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

On behalf of The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys, I am presenting this year's annual report to Governor Rick Scott, Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli, Senate President, Andy Gardiner, Attorney General Pam Bondi, state agency heads, community advocates and organizations, and the citizens of the state of Florida. This report is the product of another year's effort to continue to research and find remedies for disparate conditions affecting black males across the state. I offer my gratitude to Attorney General Bondi and her staff as well as the Governor and his staff for their continued support, without which the Council could not accomplish its mission. This year was an amazing year of needed dialogue to help identify the barriers that affect black males. The Council held several Days of Dialogue throughout the state that consisted of discussions in the areas of education, encounters with law enforcement, and youth employment. Each were conducted to heighten awareness of and to share best practices for overcoming barriers that affect black males. In addition, the Council took the lead in meeting with mental health officials to discuss mental health services and conditions.

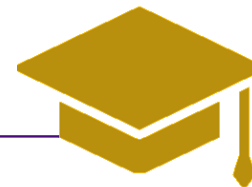
In 2016, the Council will host a Day of Dialogue with historically black colleges and universities Presidents and Deans of Education. Also, it is the hope of the Council to host a Day of Dialogue to identify and address any public safety risks associated with the attrition of mental health services. The Council will continue to focus its energies on researching strategies to reduce the barriers affecting black males with the hope that the lives of black males will improve through the collective efforts of good men and women in the state of Florida.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Eddy M. Regnier in black ink.

Eddy M. Regnier, Ph.D

Chairman



The “Day of Dialogue,” sponsored by The Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys, proved to be an effective method to gather pertinent information related to improving the education experience of students, particularly black males, enrolled in Florida schools. The event was held February 4, 2015 at the Michael and Libby Johnson Center for Civic Engagement on the campus of the Bethune-Cookman University and featured a panel of academic scholars and superintendents of schools who shared research, best practices and innovative programming that have resulted in the enhancement of education access and opportunity for black male students. The event was attended by 300 students, educators, community leaders, elected officials, and local citizens participating in the two-part forum to hear education experts discuss potential solutions to critical issues that impact the success of Florida’s black male student population. Video greetings were provided by: U.S. Representative Frederica Wilson (D-Miami), Florida Department of Education Commissioner Pam Stewart, and Florida Department of Education Chancellor Rod Duckworth.

The Day of Dialogue consisted of two panels. The first, titled “Beyond the Achievement Gap: Towards an Understanding of the Past, Present and Future Social Status of Black Males and Education in the State of Florida.” The second panel titled, “Best Practices,” highlighted successful Florida superintendents of schools who have developed or implemented existing initiatives that are showing positive results in improving their district’s overall performance while decreasing the achievement gap of its black male student population.

A segment of the event was dedicated to highlighted best practices related to recruitment, admissions, accountability and technology to contribute to the educational advancement of black males.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the information shared during the Day of Dialogue, the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys will support and promote the following recommendations aimed at advancing educational outcomes for black males:

- ◆ Encourage the implementation statewide of current programs that have improved key Florida district’s ability to effectively engage parents, such as “The Parent Academy.”
- ◆ Recommend the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Legislature develop statewide policy to standardize the current Code of Conduct for its 67 counties.
- ◆ Organize and host a meeting of Deans of Florida’s Colleges and Universities, Colleges of Education to identify and adopt strategies that would incentivize more black males to enter the education field in the State of Florida.



Pictured left to right: Jacob Oliva, Superintendent of Schools, Flagler County, Billy Close Billy Close, Ph.D., professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Florida State University, Rhonda Sharpe Rhonda Sharpe, Ph.D., professor of Economics, Bucknell University, Patrick Mason, Ph.D., professor of Economics and Director of African-American Studies, Florida State University, Eddy Regnier, Ph.D., Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, Assessment and Psychotherapy Services and Council Chairman, Nikolai P. Vitti, Superintendent of Schools, Duval County, Reginald C. James, Superintendent of Schools, Gadsden County, Arnold Montgomery, Administrative Director, Miami-Dade Office of Education Access & Diversity



The Council sponsored a series of "Day of Dialogue" events in an effort to gather information on the perspective on law enforcement encounters from black youth and the law enforcement community. The first event was held on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina in conjunction with the 30th National Conference on Preventing Crime in the Black Community. The session was attended by Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, Directors, Division Manager's, City Marshall's and FBI personnel from across the state. The day's discussions centered on identifying solutions for critical community issues that impact black males. During the afternoon, a Teen Workshop entitled "The Cypher: Kicking the Truth to Black Youth," was sponsored by the Council for a teen audience. The workshop created a platform for law enforcement and teen participants to engage in a discussion about various situations faced by black males in the community. Youth in attendance had an opportunity to speak openly about barriers that they face in the community. Law enforcement representatives used this opportunity to educate the teens on the positive and negative consequences that could result from various encounters with law enforcement and reinforced positive youth behaviors.



The second event was hosted by the Council on Tuesday July 14, 2015 in Ft. Myers, Florida at the Dr. Carrie Robinson Community Center. This event engaged city leaders and youth from the local community in a discussion on the topics that included, favorable encounters with law enforcement, youth's perception of law enforcement and strategies to improve community relations between black males and law enforcement. This event was attended by local City Councilmen, Police Chiefs, Deputies, Directors, Division Manager's, Clergy and representatives from youth organizations.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the information shared during the Day of Dialogue, the Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men & Boys will support and promote the following recommendations:

- ◆ Collaborate with the Statewide law enforcement associations to develop strategies aimed at improving law enforcement interactions with black males.



Strategic Objective: On annual basis, "Smart Justice" strategies will increase statewide for black males.

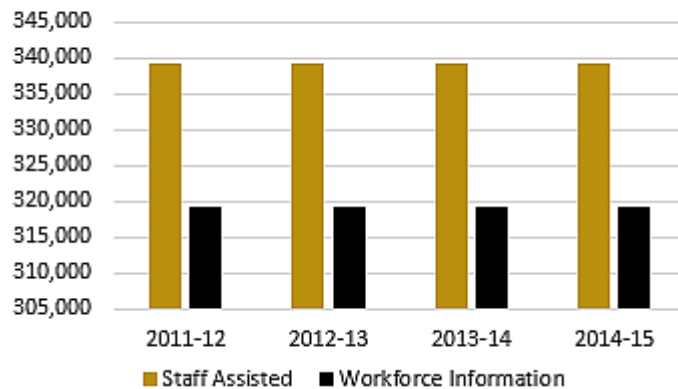
The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) civil citation initiative addresses a youth's behavior at his or her first encounter with the juvenile justice system, and provides an alternative to arrest for first time misdemeanants. The Council is committed to promoting those criminal justice and crime prevention programs that implement "smart justice" strategies that programs that offer early interventions to address the underlying causes of misconduct, swift sanctions, holds the youth accountable and discourages future offenses. Between October 2014 and September 2015, 20,064 youth were eligible to receive a civil citation. Of those eligible, 8,675 (43%) were issued a civil citation. Of the 8,675 who were issued a civil citation, 1,948 (22%) were black males.



Strategic Objective: Improve economic opportunities for black males.

During PY 2015, 263,396 black males received a staff assisted workforce service at a local career center. Provided Workforce Services provided included job search assistance, pre-employment training, work experience, and case management support.

Workforce Services - Black Males



Special Initiative: “Day of Dialogue” — Employment

The Council remains committed to promoting positive employment outcomes for black males by maximizing the resources available through Florida’s workforce system. On December 10, 2015, the Council will host a Day of Dialogue focused on Employment. The event will offer participants the opportunity to hear from national, state and local practitioners on topics related to “Reaching Out” to our youth, “What Works: Best Practices” and offer a forum for exchanging ideas that will lead our youth to a pathway to prosperity.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): In July 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in to law. Currently, Florida’s workforce system is transitioning to fully implement the requirements of WIOA. WIOA funding gives states and local communities dedicated resources to implement effective employment, education, and youth development strategies for the most vulnerable young people in highly distressed communities. This redirected funding gives states and local communities dedicated resources to implement effective employment, education, and youth development strategies for the most vulnerable young people in highly distressed communities.



Strategic Objective: Decrease the rates of obesity as reported by the Florida Department of Health



Healthiest Weight Initiative: The Council remains committed to supporting the efforts of the Florida’s Department of Health in the implementation of its Healthiest Weight Florida Initiative. This initiative is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not for profit organizations, businesses, and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make choices about healthy eating and active living. The Council realizes that achieving healthy weight in Florida is a marathon and not a sprint, therefore plans to continue all effort to support the department and its partners in making Florida the healthiest state in the nation.

Mental Health: In 2015, the Council led the way in a “Call for Action” to improve the state’s mental health system. Mental health issues cause suffering across all economic, educational and racial groups across the state. In attempt to better understand the scope of the problem, the Council organized a conference call in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections and other interested parties. Topics discussed by the participants during the conference call included the current status of the state’s mental health

system of care, the population that is most affected by the lack of services, and policy changes as well as resources needed to improve the state’s mental health system. The Council has committed to convene a Mental Health Day of Dialogue, during which all stakeholders can join together in an effort to advance meaningful and impactful mental health policy recommendations to improve the state’s mental health system.

★ CONNECTING PEOPLE...UPHOLDING VALUES...SUPPORTING DREAMS ★

Tallahassee | December 10, 2015

The Council convened a "Day of Dialogue" focused on promoting positive employment outcomes for black males by maximizing the resources available through Florida's workforce system.

Daytona | February 5, 2015

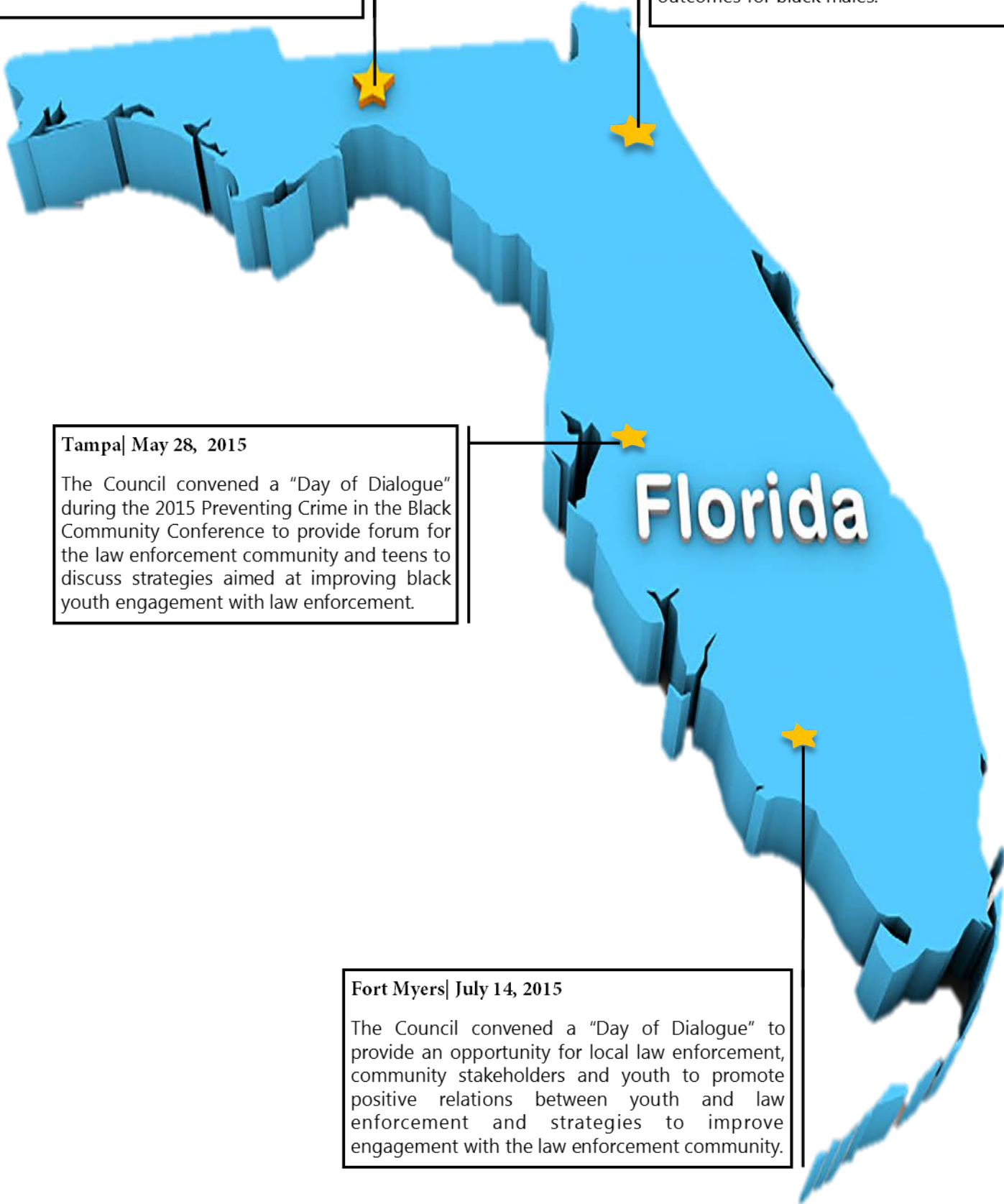
The Council convened a "Day of Dialogue" on the campus of Bethune-Cookman University to discuss strategies to improve the educational outcomes for black males.

Tampa | May 28, 2015

The Council convened a "Day of Dialogue" during the 2015 Preventing Crime in the Black Community Conference to provide forum for the law enforcement community and teens to discuss strategies aimed at improving black youth engagement with law enforcement.

Fort Myers | July 14, 2015

The Council convened a "Day of Dialogue" to provide an opportunity for local law enforcement, community stakeholders and youth to promote positive relations between youth and law enforcement and strategies to improve engagement with the law enforcement community.



COUNCIL MEMBERS

2015



Chairman
Eddy M. Regnier, Ph.D.
Clinical and Forensic Psychologist
Assessment and Psychotherapy Services



Vice Chair
Lois A. Scott, Bureau Chief
Department of Economic Opportunity



1st Vice Chair
Edison O. Jackson, Ed.D., President
Bethune-Cookman University



2nd Vice Chair
Argatha Rigby-Gilmore, Police Chief
Lake City Police Department



Gilbert D. Barnes, Victim Services Administrator
Florida Department of Corrections



Damon T. Rich, Administrator
Agency for Health Care Administration



Rob Bradley, Senator
Florida State Senate, District 7



Albert Simpson, Jr., Ph.D., Reverend
Philemon Missionary Baptist Church



Charles E. Van Zant, Representative
Florida State Representative, District 19



Malone D. Smith, IT Director
Department of Children and Families



Oscar Braynon II, Senator
Florida State Senate, District 36



Craig Swain, Disproportionate Minority Contact Specialist
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice



Rod Duckworth, Chancellor
Division of Career and Adult Education



Shawn Thomas, Reverend
Mt. Zion Progressive Missionary Baptist Church



Thad Fortune, Administrator
Department of Management Services



Alan B. Williams, Representative
Florida State Representative, District 8



William Hardin, Manager
Business Operations Unit



Paul Wilson, Administrative Director
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



Mike Mason, Director
Florida Department of Health

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