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# **TAKING ACTION ON THE GROUND**

PROGRESS ON THE  
PRESIDENT'S PRIORITIES  
IN STATE AND LOCAL  
COMMUNITIES

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AUGUST 18, 2015

*“And I’m proud of it particularly when it’s so hard to get anything through Congress – even when we’re talking about issues that most Americans outside of Washington agree on. But that’s also why we’ve partnered with many of you over the past couple of years – to make real progress on the economic priorities that matter to middle-class Americans.”*

*– President Obama at the US Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting, June 19, 2015*

Since taking office, President Obama has recognized that change cannot just happen in Washington, DC, but must take place across the country. That’s why the President has prioritized partnering with local and state elected officials to address the issues that matter most to Americans – from supporting working families, to improving education, to creating good new jobs, to increasing affordable housing, and a whole range of other issues impacting families and communities across the country. In the President’s 2015 State of the Union, he stated that “It’s now up to us to choose who we want to be over the next fifteen years, and for decades to come.” State and local elected officials and communities across the country have chosen, and on America’s most important priorities, they are not standing still:

- 17 states and the District of Columbia have increased their minimum wage since the President first called for an increase in his 2013 State of the Union;
- 17 cities and counties have implemented paid sick leave policies and 10 cities and counties have implemented paid family leave policies since January 2014;
- 34 Governors proposed increasing funding for early education since the President announced preschool for all in 2013.
- Since its launch in March 2015, 31 cities, states, and tribal communities have joined the President’s TechHire initiative to rapidly train workers for technology jobs that pay 50 percent more than the average private-sector American job;
- More than 50 communities that participated in the MBK Community Challenge have completed their own local action plans;
- More than 700 state, county and city officials have joined the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness since the First Lady announced the program in June 2014.

And that’s just a sampling of the progress that’s taken place over the last several years. While Congress has stood in the way of addressing these issues, mayors and governors of both parties are working with the President to make progress. Below are a few examples of the ways state and local elected officials and communities are taking action to help hardworking American families get ahead.

## Minimum Wage



- Since the President called for a minimum wage increase during his State of the Union remarks in 2013, **17 states and the District of Columbia** have increased their minimum wage – including **four states** where voters approved minimum wage increases on Election Day in 2014. According to estimates from the Council of Economic Advisers, about **seven million workers** will benefit from these increases as of 2017. Cities and counties have also forged ahead, with **29 local jurisdictions** including Chicago, IL; Berkeley, CA; Las Cruces, NM; Montgomery County, MD; and Seattle, WA taking action to increase wages.
- **More than 65 mayors** signed a letter from the U.S. Conference of Mayors Cities of Opportunity Task Force, calling for a raise in the minimum wage.
- Companies taking steps include: Wal-Mart, Disney, Gap, TJX Companies, Target, IKEA, Aetna, and Starbucks.

## Paid Sick and Family Leave

- Since January 2014, paid sick leave ordinances have gone into effect in **17 cities and counties**, and paid family leave has gone into effect in **10 cities and counties**. **Three states**, Rhode Island, California, and Massachusetts, have also implemented paid sick leave or paid family leave, and Oregon recently passed paid sick leave. Laws allowing workers to earn and accrue sick leave will go into effect in 2016 in Oregon; Montgomery County, MD; and Tacoma, WA.

- **Pittsburgh, PA:** Most recently, Mayor Bill Peduto and the Pittsburgh City Council enacted paid sick leave citywide. The ordinance is predicted to impact 50,000 workers across the city, or roughly 40 percent of Pittsburgh’s private sector workers and 77 percent of service workers.
- As part of the #LeadOnLeave tour, Secretary Perez, Valerie Jarrett, and Tina Tchen have traveled to cities across the country including Seattle, WA; Atlanta, GA; and Providence, RI to highlight actions taken by mayors to expand flexible working policies such as paid leave and to discuss how more cities and states can support their workers with flexible policies.
- Companies taking steps include: Netflix, McDonalds, Microsoft, Adobe, Vodafone, and Change.org.



### **Early Childhood Education**

- Since the President laid out his proposal to expand early childhood education in his 2013 State of the Union Address, cities such as Seattle, WA; Denver, CO; Boston, MA; Cleveland, OH; and San Francisco, CA have leveraged federal funding, public-private partnership, and ballot initiatives to expand preschool.

**34 Governors proposed increasing funding for early education since the President announced his Preschool for All proposal. Major state-level expansions include:**

- 33,000 new slots from the Department of Education’s Preschool Development Grants, a state-federal partnership

- 50,000 new slots in New York City
  - 11,500 new slots in California
  - 20,000 new slots in Michigan
  - 48,000 new slots in Washington state
- On December 10, 2014, the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services announced more than 750 million in grants to help communities increase the quality and number of seats in pre-school programs. In December 2014, **more than 90 mayors** signed a letter supporting the President's proposal.

### Climate and Energy

- Since the President laid out his Climate Action Plan in June 2013, state, local, and tribal officials have taken steps in partnership with the Administration to address impacts and challenges associated with climate change. Some of the steps include:
  - In January 2015, the President launched the Presidential Challenge for Advanced Outdoor Lighting with commitments from 2 states, 10 cities, and 3 regional networks to replace their outdoor lighting poles with more efficient technologies including: the Mid-American Regional Council; Huntington Beach, California; West Palm Beach, Florida; Little Rock Arkansas; and Detroit, Michigan; Southern California Regional Energy Network; Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources; Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office; Flint, Michigan; Portland, Maine; Dearborn, Michigan; Saint Petersburg, Florida; San Diego, California; Los Angeles, California; and the State of Tennessee.
  - In December 2014, the President announced 16 designees from around the country as Climate Action Champions for their leadership on climate action. This diverse group is defining the frontier of ambitious climate action, and their approaches will serve as a model for other communities to follow. The 16 Climate Action Champions include:
    - Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe (CA); Boston (MA); Broward County, FL; Dubuque, IA; Knoxville, TN; Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (DC, MD, and VA); Mid-America Regional Council (KS and MO); Minneapolis, MN; Montpelier, VT; Oberlin, OH; Portland, OR; Salt Lake City, UT; San Francisco, CA; Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians (MI); Seattle, WA; and Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (CA)

- On November 17, 2014, the President’s State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience presented recommendations to the Vice President on how the Administration can help communities prepare for the impacts of climate change.

### Community College

- In March, more than **50 mayors** signed a letter supporting the President’s America’s College Promise proposal.
- Schools announcing tuition-free plans since the President made his proposal include: Harper College in Palatine, IL, Community College of Philadelphia, and Sinclair College in Dayton, OH
- Governor Kate Brown (OR) signed a bill to waive tuition at community colleges this July.
- Minnesota passed a pilot project in May for next year to offer scholarships offsetting tuition at high-demand technical colleges to more than **1,300 students**.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA WANTS TO MAKE TWO YEARS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE AS FREE AND UNIVERSAL AS HIGH SCHOOL IS TODAY**



WHEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED, HIS PROPOSAL COULD:

- **Save** a full-time community college student an **average of \$3,800 in tuition per year**
- **Benefit about 9 million students** per year if they earn good grades and stay on track to graduate

#CommunityCollege

### My Brother’s Keeper

- In 2014, the President launched the MBK Community Challenge, a call to action for communities to implement coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategies aimed at improving life outcomes for all. Today **more than 230 communities** have taken the challenge and **130 communities** have hosted local action summits.

- Approximately 50 communities have completed their local action plans including **Philadelphia, PA; Boston, MA; and Indianapolis, IN.**

*Some of the projects organized by individual MBK Communities include:*

- **Newark, NJ:** In January 2015, Newark hosted a Young Men of Color and Law Enforcement forum, which was designed to facilitate dialogue around issues that strain the relationship between law enforcement and African-American, Latino, and other youth.
- **Boston, MA:** In January 2015, Mayor Walsh launched the Mayor's Mentoring Movement, an initiative in collaboration with Mass Mentoring Partnership to recruit 1,000 new caring adult mentors for Boston's youth.
- **Chicago, IL:** In July 2014, the city of Chicago announced an investment in the Becoming A Man (BAM) program, to expand enrollment from 600 to 2,000 students.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** Later in November, the city hosted the first-ever MBK Youth Hackathon at String Theory Schools in center city Philadelphia. The nongovernmental program, supported by Qeyno Labs and #YesWeCode, drew 95 participants (ages 13-20) to form teams and build apps focused on one of five tracks: education, health and wellness, restorative justice, food and sustainability, and masculinity.
- **New York, NY:** Originally launched in 2011 by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City's Young Men's Initiative (YMI) was re-launched in January of 2015 by Mayor Bill de Blasio in order to be more closely aligned with the goals of the MBK initiative.
- **Washington, DC:** In January 2015, Mayor Bowser launched Empowering Males of Color, a new \$20M initiative called Empowering Males of Color (EMOC). Through EMOC, DCPS will take a close look at the challenges and successes Black and Latino males experience from pre-K to Grade 12, aiming to find ways to make school more exciting, increase academic success, and prepare males of color for college, careers and life beyond DCPS
- In June 2014, **Sacramento** Mayor Kevin Johnson, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), announced the establishment of USCM's MBK Task Force during the organization's annual meeting in Dallas, Texas.

- **More than forty communities** have committed to developing strategies to ensure all youth remain safe from violent crime and are provided a second chance. Some examples include:

- In December 2014, the President created the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Task Force to examine, among other issues, how to promote effective crime reduction while building public trust. **Since then, 24 jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies**, including Richmond, CA; Dallas, TX; and Camden, NJ; committed to release a combined total of 101 data sets that have not been released to the public. The types of data include uses of force, police pedestrian and vehicle stops, citations, and officer involved shootings. This data helps communities gain visibility into key information on police/citizen encounters.
- **Washington, DC:** The local partners leading the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge process on behalf of the City have created a partnership with the D.C. Police Department to provide trainings for officers before they leave the academy focused on how to engage with young people in the community.
- **Indianapolis, IN:** The city has committed to provide training for all criminal justice partners: police, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, probation, parole, and community corrections officers on racial bias and disparities in order to improve cultural competence of the system. They have also joined the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), a bipartisan movement for juvenile justice reinvestment – the reallocation of government resources away from mass incarceration and toward investment in youth, families, and communities.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** The First Judicial District, the Philadelphia School District, the Police Department, and the Department of Human Services seek to deliver a 50 percent reduction in the number of children arrested and to eliminate the racial disparity in these arrests and other school-based disciplinary actions. Their plan, the School Diversion Program, allows students who have committed first time low-level delinquent acts on school premises to enter intensive prevention services rather than face arrest.
- **Boston, MA:** Mayor Martin J. Walsh with the support of The Boston Foundation announced the launch of a strategic and comprehensive city-wide public safety plan. They pledged \$3.1 million in funding for this effort over three years, which allowed for the integration of the

StreetSafe program into a citywide expansion of on-the-ground outreach to youth at risk of violent crime, in coordination with the Boston Police Department (BPD) and the Mayor's Public Safety Initiative.

- In July 2014, **sixty-three school districts** (as of February 2015) represented by the Council of Great City Schools joined in a first-ever collective pledge to improve the educational outcomes for students from early childhood to graduation by implementing a set of evidence-based strategies. Some examples:
  - **Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC:** Schools set up centers where suspended students take classes to ensure that they do not fall behind.
  - **Norfolk, VA:** High schools have graduation coaches who monitor attendance and course data, enroll students in credit recovery programs, and conduct home visits to find out why students are absent.
  - **San Francisco, CA:** The school district now uses a blind review process for admission to special education services that strips the applications of students' names, ethnicity, and grade level.

### Veteran Homelessness

- In June 2014, the First Lady announced the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness encouraging local elected officials to end homelessness among veterans in their communities by December 2015.
- More than 700 state, county and city officials have signed on to the challenge, with many effectively ending veteran homelessness in their areas. Some examples include:
  - **New Orleans, LA:** Mayor Mitch Landrieu was one of the first Mayors to answer the First Lady's call and sign on to the challenge. He fast-tracked local efforts to connect homeless veterans with permanent housing, and on January 7, 2015, New Orleans became the first major U.S. city to functionally end homelessness among veterans.
  - **Houston, TX:** Mayor Annise Parker and local non-profit partners have created the infrastructure to quickly house any veteran that becomes homeless.

## Let's Move! Initiative

- In February 2010, the First Lady announced her Let's Move! Initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation. Partnering with the National League of Cities, **more than 400 communities** have joined Let's Move! Cities Towns and Counties Challenge which includes five measurable and achievable goals for each area.

## ConnectED

An infographic for ConnectED. On the left, a blue vertical bar contains three white silhouettes of students wearing graduation caps and sitting at laptops. Below them, the text "3 million students" is written in white. On the right, a white background with horizontal blue lines contains the text "THIS IS #ConnectED:" in blue and green. Below that, it says "3 million students in all 50 states are now using free high-quality technology, connectivity, and training resources as part of private commitments available thanks to ConnectED." The words "free high-quality technology, connectivity, and training resources" are in orange. At the bottom right, a green box contains the text "Wh.gov/ConnectED" in white.

**THIS IS #ConnectED:**

3 million students in all 50 states are now using **free high-quality technology, connectivity, and training resources** as part of private commitments available thanks to ConnectED.

[Wh.gov/ConnectED](http://Wh.gov/ConnectED)

- In June 2013, President Obama announced ConnectED to transform teaching and learning through digital connectivity and content. The total value delivered as part of this five-year transformation in American education will be over \$10 billion. This includes \$2 billion in private-sector commitments, and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) funding for school and library connectivity that includes \$2 billion specifically for Wi-Fi, and an additional \$1.5 billion in annual funding. As a result of these commitments, we are on track to meet the President's goal of connecting 99 percent of students to high-speed broadband in their classrooms and libraries by 2018.
- Complementing that effort, the ConnectED Library Challenge is a commitment by more than 30 communities to put a library card into every student's hand so they will have access to learning resources and books they can read for pleasure, all available in America's libraries.

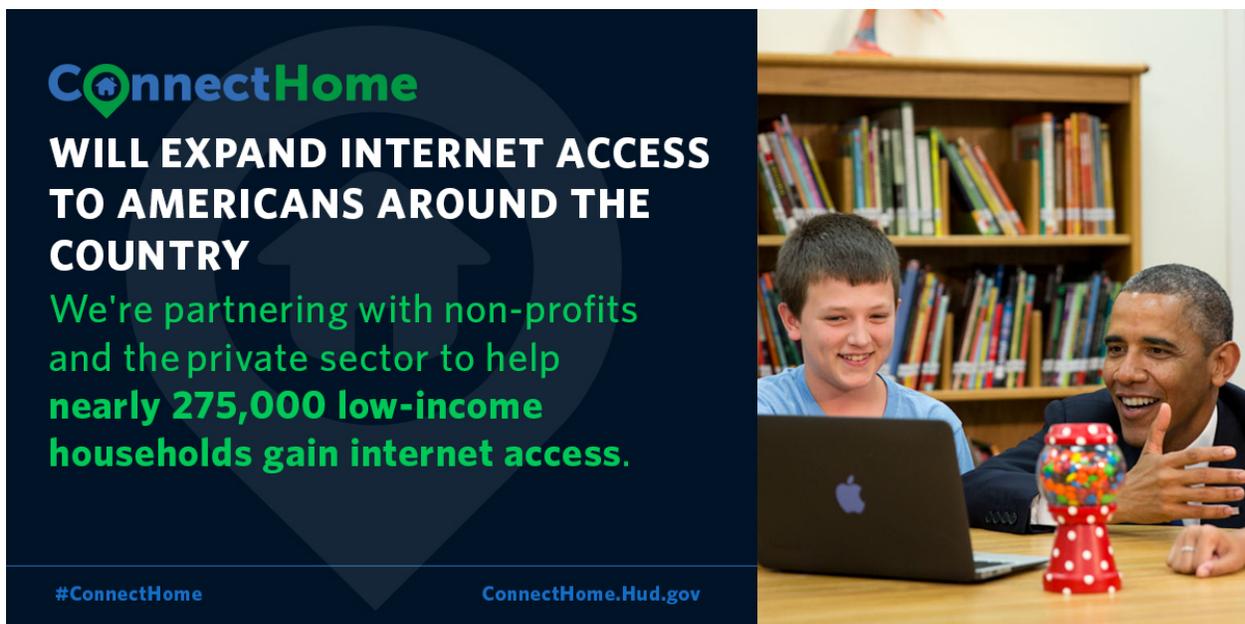
- Here are some examples of school districts that are putting digital learning to work through ConnectED:
  - **Milwaukee, WI.** Mayor Barrett has helped lead efforts to deploy ConnectED and E-rate resources, and as a result Milwaukee students have gigabit Internet speeds in their schools – nearly 100 times faster than the average American’s connection. This year Milwaukee will receive \$5 million dollars to triple their Wi-Fi coverage and connect every one of their students to high-speed wireless internet in their classrooms. And 20 of Milwaukee’s schools have already received ConnectED donated resources – ranging from devices to 3-D engineering software – from three different companies.
  - **Miami, FL.** Earlier this summer, Miami-Dade County Public Schools was awarded \$12 million dollars from the FCC’s E-rate program for crucial Wi-Fi upgrades in their classrooms, and the district’s ambitious initiative to provide each student with a computer or tablet will allow kids to take full advantage the increased connectivity. Of the four different ConnectED corporate commitments that have impacted Miami’s students, Sprint has already provided over a thousand students with free high-speed mobile-broadband service on their school devices so that they can stay connected to their schoolwork during bus rides to and from home.
  - **Baltimore, MD.** Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Superintendent Dallas Dance have embarked on an ambitious campaign called Students and Teachers Accessing Tomorrow, which aims to provide a computer device to each student. Over 30 Baltimore City Public Schools have already accessed ConnectED private-sector commitments from six different companies in order to provide their students with digital learning tools like tablets and professional-grade software that leverage the increased connectivity provided by the E-rate program. And thanks to one of Microsoft’s ConnectED commitments, all students in the state of Maryland and their family members can now access free of charge up to five copies of the Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus suite for their computers and tablets.

### ConnectHome

- Building on the success of ConnectED, in July 2015, the President traveled to Choctaw Nation in Durant, OK to announce ConnectHome, a new initiative with communities, the private sector, and the federal government to expand

access to low-cost, high-speed Internet to more families across the country. The pilot program launched in 27 cities and one tribal nation and will initially reach over 275,000 low-income households – and nearly 200,000 children – with the support they need to access the Internet at home. Internet service providers, non-profits, and the private sector committed to offering broadband access, technical training, digital literacy programs, and devices for residents in public housing. The following communities committed to participate and were selected by HUD to participate in the first year of ConnectHome:

- Albany, GA; Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Baton Rouge, LA; Boston, MA; Camden, NJ; Choctaw Nation, OK; Cleveland, OH; Denver, CO; Durham, NC; Fresno, CA; Kansas City, MO; Little Rock, AR; Los Angeles, CA; Macon, GA; Memphis, TN; Meriden, CT; Nashville, TN; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Newark, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Rockford, IL; San Antonio, TX; Seattle, WA; Springfield, MA; Tampa, FL; and Washington, DC.



### TechHire

- In March 2015, the President announced his TechHire initiative, a bold multisector effort to empower Americans with the skills they need to succeed in today's economy. The effort includes engagement through universities and community colleges; innovative nontraditional approaches like “coding bootcamps;” and high-quality online courses that can rapidly train workers for technology jobs that pay 50 percent more than the average private-sector American job.

- Since then, **31 new cities, states, and rural communities** with over 150,000 open tech jobs and 500 employer partners have joined the TechHire initiative making independent commitments to help applicants find work based on their skills and not just their degree, to create more accelerated tech training opportunities, and invest in innovative placement programs to connect diverse workers to entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs. Some examples:
  - **Rhode Island:** The state has assembled 18 employers, including CVS, Citizens Bank, Fidelity, and Innovex, to recruit more than 2,000 candidates from fast-track tech training programs by 2018. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Commerce RI, and Opportunity@Work are working with Tech Collective to develop Rhode Island's IT workforce pipeline and train individuals through bootcamp-style IT training programs, with a focus on low-income community members.
  - **San Jose, CA:** In partnership with work2future, Year Up, #YesWeCode, and others, San Jose will launch a new fast-track training program for occupations, including software programming and network administration, in the information and communications technology, manufacturing, and health sectors. With an initial \$1.2 million investment from the city, SJ TechHire will target young adults and long-term unemployed individuals, aiming to train 1,000 people and diversify the pool of local tech talent by 2016. Employers that have committed to support the initiative include eBay Inc., Facebook, Inc. Symantec Corporation, Jabil, Kaiser, and others.
  - **New York City, NY:** With employers including Microsoft, Verizon, Goldman Sachs, Google, and Facebook, the Tech Talent Pipeline is announcing new commitments to prepare college students in the City University of New York (CUNY) system for and connect them to paid internship opportunities at local tech companies. New York City will also expand successful models like the NYC Web Development Fellowship serving 18-26 year olds without a college degree in partnership with the Flatiron School.

### Startup in a Day

- In June 2015, the President and Small Business Administration (SBA) announced the Startup in a Day initiative to provide funding and other support to

communities to help them streamline the licensing, permitting, and other requirements needed to start a business in their areas, with the goal of enabling entrepreneurs to apply for everything necessary to start a business within one business day.

- Since then, **more than 70 cities** have pledged to make the startup process easier for entrepreneurs. Of those, **28 cities and Native American communities** received SBA awards in August 2015, including:
  - **Boston, MA:** Mayor Marty Walsh has increased on-time permit issuance by 12 percent, shortened the time to review and issue long-form permits by 8 business days, and shrunk the backlog of building complaints from 3,500 to fewer than 300. At the first ever White House Demo Day on August 4, Boston received a \$50,000 SBA award to build on these efforts, along with 24 other cities and two Native American communities. In addition to Boston, the other winners of the \$50,000 prizes were:
    - Anchorage, Alaska; Asheville, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; Boise, Idaho; Brookings, South Dakota; Burlington, Vermont; Champaign, Illinois; Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation; Choctaw Nation; Jackson, Michigan; Long Beach, California; Memphis, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Oakland, California; Peoria, Illinois; Riverside, California; Rockland, Maine; Rocky Mount, North Carolina; Rutland City, Vermont; Salt Lake City, Utah; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; St. Louis, Missouri; Washington, District of Columbia; and Wilmington, Delaware.
  - **Los Angeles, CA.** Los Angeles won the \$250,000 “Dream Big” model prize from the SBA, which goes to a community building an open-source platform solution that will be replicable and scalable on a broad basis. Out of the Startup in a Day competition will come a tool that can be used by many more communities to streamline the process of getting a business up and running, so they can focus on what they do best – creating jobs and spurring local growth.

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