



SIMS-FAYOLA FOUNDATION ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

THE PROBLEM

Despite a long history of inequity, the United States education system's treatment of students of color has remained relatively unmoved. Repeated protests calling for change continue to be undervalued and overwhelmingly ignored. The United States has long built and reinforced systems of oppression and a hierarchy of privilege that fuels white people's success by severely limiting people of color's ability to live healthy, fulfilling lives and, in many cases, to live at all. These systems influence the lives of people of color from birth to death, creating barriers limiting their ability to exercise even their most basic rights. The challenges facing boys and young men of color are startling and widespread. From their earliest years through college and adulthood, they are disproportionately disadvantaged and at-risk regardless of socioeconomic status. Challenges stem from individual encounters to massive, seemingly insurmountable systemic barriers that place roadblocks in all areas of their lives. Not only are the obstacles systemic and individual, but they are also ingrained in our social norms, attitudes and behaviors, institutions, and policies. For boys and men of color, challenges become increasingly apparent in school systems, where significant disparities exist at various levels. Academically, 86% of Black boys and 82% of Hispanic boys read below proficiency levels by the fourth grade, compared to 58% of White boys. Beyond academics, boys and young men of color are disproportionately impacted by disciplinary action. School policies from preschool to twelfth grade lead young men and boys of color to receive punishment, suspension, and expulsion at much greater rates than their white peers (Curtis, 2014; Gonzalez, 2012; Healy, 2014; Porter, 2015; Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). It is also well-documented that Black boys and men are perceived through a criminal lens (Harper, 2009). This perception is widely depicted in popular media through films that regularly portray Black boys as brutes, gangsters, drug dealers, and demonic threats (Wood & Hilton, 2013). Educational scholars have routinely made these connections, noting that teachers and school leaders often describe Black boys and men as "aggressive," "troublemakers," "too active," "hyperactive," and "dangerous." (Ford et al., 2001). There is significant consensus among researchers that these rates are directly correlated to the school-to-prison pipeline, which leads students of color to be pushed out of school and into prisons, resulting in the overrepresentation of young men of color, particularly African American males, in juvenile detention centers and the prison system (Casserly et al., 2012;

Fowler, 2011; Hatt, 2011; Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009; Raible & Irizarry, 2010; and Shippen, Patterson, Green, & Smitherman, 2012).

The disadvantages boys and young men of color face extend far beyond the school environment. Along with their disproportionate representation in the criminal justice system, young men of color are also startlingly overrepresented among victims of violent crimes. They are six times as likely to be murdered than their white peers and account for almost half of the murder victims in the United States yearly (American Psychological Association, 2015). Moreover, when leaving the school system—regardless of their graduation status—these young men are more likely to be unemployed and struggle with mental health diagnoses. Further compounding these challenges, studies analyzing the influence of communities and networks on young people find that boys and young men of color are less likely to access networks and support structures that provide critical guidance as they age. One national study establishes the disconnection rate at 21.6% for Black youth, 30.3% for Native American youth, and 16.3% for Latinx youth, far above the 11.3% rate for white youth (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015). In short, in addition to facing countless obstacles marked by systemic oppression, marginalization, and victimization, young men and boys of color lack adult support systems to guide them along the challenging journey ahead. In conjunction with the dismal achievement numbers for young men and boys of color, this reality represents a clarion call for funding new approaches.

Sims-Fayola Foundation (SFF) believes addressing these challenges requires a strategic, transformative approach that dismantles barriers that systematically marginalized young boys and men of color at multiple levels. A comprehensive, transformative approach is critical to developing institutions that work for young men and boys of color. By engaging multi-level stakeholders, from educational and community leaders to researchers, criminal justice professionals, policymakers, and youth themselves, SFF has risen to this challenge of combating systemic violence against boys and young men of color.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

At the Sims-Fayola Foundation (SFF), we believe in a strategic and transformative approach to address the barriers that systematically marginalized young boys and men of color at multiple levels. To increase the chances for success, our organization embodies a set of core values that guide our mindsets, actions, work and shape our impact.

"No excuses" is a fundamental value at SFF. We refuse to accept any limitations or obstacles that hinder the success of young men of color. We are determined to break down barriers and create opportunities for them to thrive.

We believe in **"leaving it all on the table."** We encourage young men of color to give their best in every aspect of their lives, whether it's in their education, careers, or personal growth. We empower them to push their boundaries and achieve their full potential.

At SFF, we prioritize **“growing daily.”** We understand the importance of continuous learning, development, and self-improvement. We provide resources and support to help young men of color develop their skills, knowledge, and abilities, enabling them to navigate through challenges and reach new heights.

A **“championship mindset”** is ingrained in our organizational culture. We believe in fostering a winning mentality that encourages young men of color to see themselves as champions in their own lives. We instill confidence, resilience, and determination, empowering them to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

Lastly, we strongly emphasize the value of **“showing up for each other.”** We believe in the power of community and support. We create a network of individuals, organizations, and stakeholders who are committed to standing alongside young men of color, providing them with the guidance, mentorship, and resources they need to succeed.

At SFF, these values are not just words on paper; they are the driving force behind our mission to transform the lives of young men of color. Through our comprehensive approach and collaborative efforts, we are dedicated to creating a future where all young men of color have equal opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential.

HISTORY, MISSION, VISION & OBJECTIVES

SFF was founded in 2014 by Dr. Dedrick Sims, a Denver-area nonprofit executive, educator, school leader, and educational architect whose experiences and expertise inform SFF’s mission. Recognizing the complex challenges facing young men of color, SFF developed a comprehensive strategy to change their life trajectories and address barriers inhibiting their success. Serving as the backbone organization for My Brother’s Keeper Denver, SFF has deepened its connection to the community of young men of color it serves by not only providing reactive on-the-ground programming but also proactive systems change work that’s designed to create a continuum of services from cradle-to-college-to-career for young men of color.

SFF builds capacity through fundraising, staffing, operational improvements, and internal assessments. Notable collaborators and supporters include The Denver Foundation, Rose Community Foundation, U.S. Bank, The University of Colorado at Denver, New Schools Venture Fund, the City and County of Denver, Vectra Bank, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Lockheed Martin, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Caring for Denver, Caring for Colorado, the Gates Family Foundation, United Healthcare, PDC Energy, Tony Grampas Youth Services, The Denver Broncos Foundation, Black Child Development Institute, and the Denver Office of Children’s Affairs, Sargent & Lundy, Denver Foundation, BRIC, Colorado Health Foundation, Denver Public Schools, and Aurora Public Schools.

MISSION

The Sims-Fayola Foundation's mission is to improve the life outcomes of young men of color through direct programming and catalyzing systems change by addressing the root causes of educational inequities and institutional barriers.

VISION

Our vision is a world in which through collaborative partnerships with schools, community organizations, city agencies, and policymakers, we aim to collectively transform policies, practices, and resources to create an inclusive and supportive environment for these young men and boys. This collaborative approach fosters a systemic shift that benefits individuals and contributes to broader societal change and equity. We envision a future where policies, practices, and resources are transformed to create an inclusive and supportive environment for these young men and boys, enabling them to thrive and contribute to a more equitable society.

OBJECTIVE

The Sims Fayola Foundation's mission is to improve the life outcomes of young men of color through direct programming and catalyzing systems change by addressing the root causes of educational inequities and institutional barriers. Through collaborative partnerships with schools, community organizations, city agencies, and policymakers, we aim to collectively transform policies, practices, and resources to create an inclusive and supportive environment for these young men and boys. This collaborative approach fosters a systemic shift that benefits individuals and contributes to broader societal change and equity.

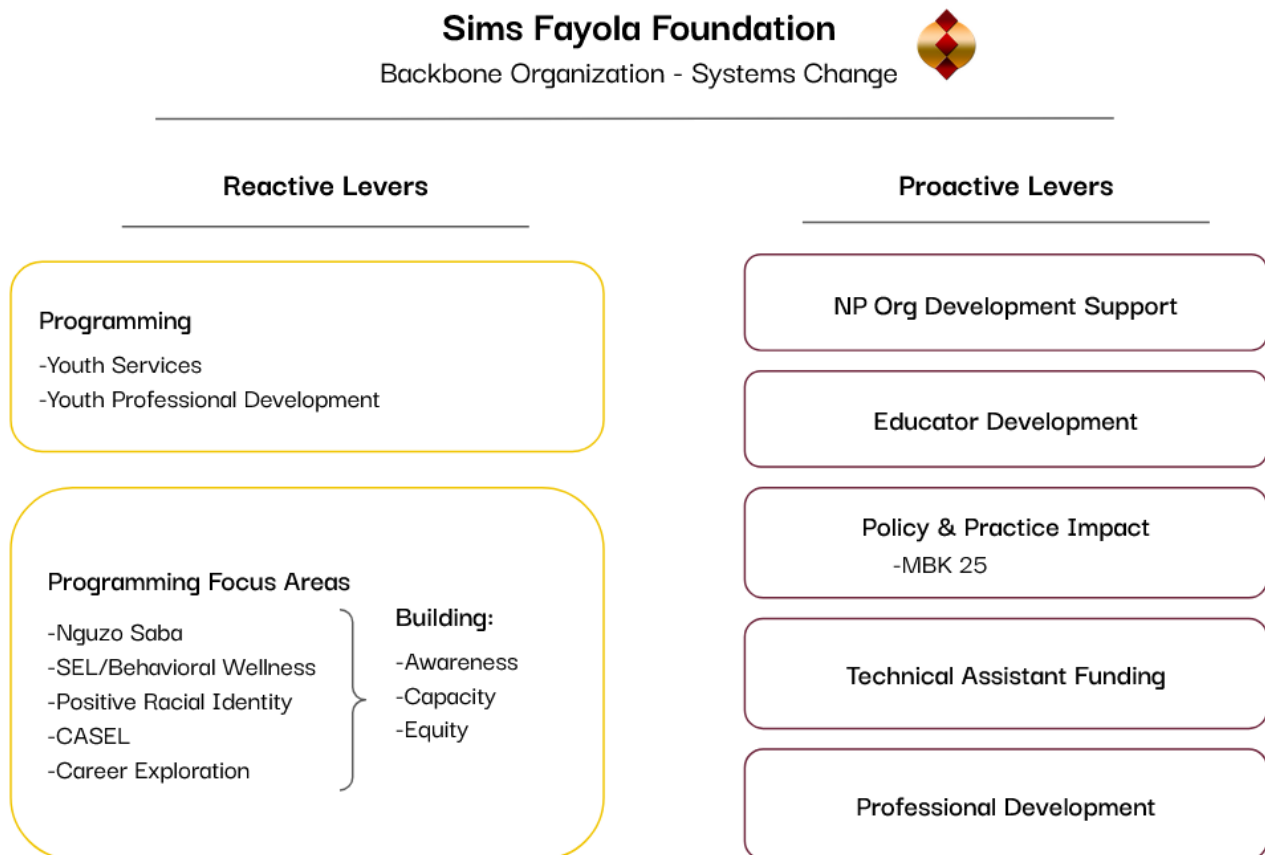
THE SIMS-FAYOLA APPROACH

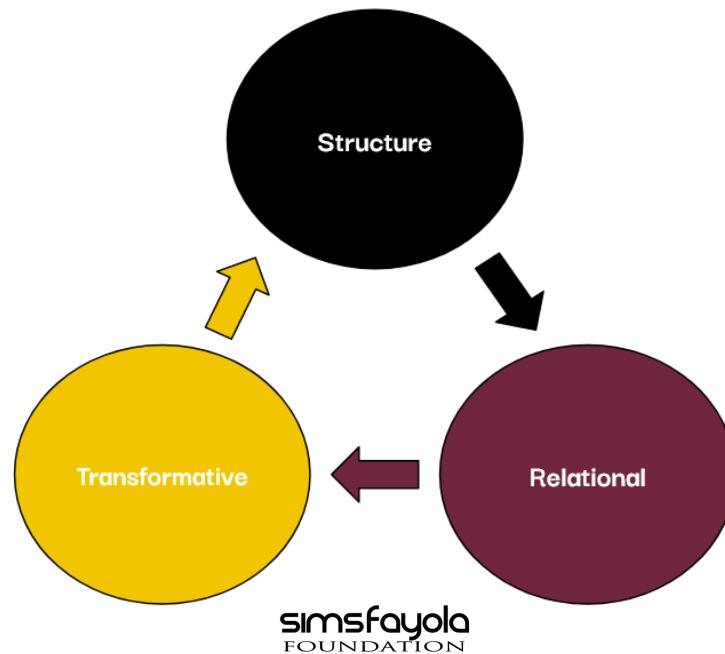
The Sims Fayola Foundation is an organization that acknowledges and addresses the challenges faced by boys and young men of color. We take a transformative approach, focusing on internal shifts in ideas, beliefs, and values to bring about sustainable change. SFF's work lies at the precipice of the need to create transformative change from the inside out. The foundation offers programs, workshops, and services to stakeholders who impact the lives of young men and boys of color, as well as directly working with them. We provide educators, youth service professionals, and parents with tools, resources, and information to support positive outcomes. Additionally, the foundation serves as the backbone organization for My Brother's Keeper Denver, actively working to improve the life outcomes of young men and boys of color from cradle to career. SFF influences public opinion, public policy, and societal norms by changing the narrative misrepresenting young men and boys of color. The Sims Fayola Foundation plays a crucial role in guiding the overall direction of collective impact efforts and facilitates collaboration among various stakeholders. We establish a shared vision and common agenda, collect and analyze data, and ensure accountability. The foundation secures funding and resources needed for the initiative and provides structural support. Overall, SFF will serve as the backbone of the collaborative effort, driving systemic change and striving for positive outcomes for young men and boys of color.

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING THE STAFF

SFF supports its staff development and growth through weekly one-on-ones with the Director of Programs and the Director of Professional Learning. The one-on-ones with the Director of Programs are focused on program implementation, compliance, and needed support, while the one-on-ones with the Director of Professional Learning are focused on the quality of program implementation, pedagogical skills, knowledge development of the instructional framework, and observational feedback. Also, once a month the staff has a half-day professional development that focuses on program implementation, observational feedback, and the instructional framework of the model. Finally, in addition to the ability to work remotely on Fridays, each staff member receives a yearly stipend for self-care initiatives of their choice. The staff also engages in Self-Care Mondays where the CEO brings in outside health and wellness vendors to provide their services (yoga, life coaching, mindfulness coaching, massages, etc.) for the staff followed by a book study.

Sims-Fayola Foundation Divisions/Programming Chart





1. Youth Services (School and Community Based)

- Empowered Ambition Youth Development Program for Young Men
- Community Mentoring Program (CMP)
- Community Virtual Mentoring Program (CVMP)
- Fayola Man Career Academy (FMCA)
- Fayola Man Summer Leadership Academy
- Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone (SFEZ)

1. Youth Service Professional Development

- Working with Boys of Color Workshops
- Hardwired by Nature Workshops
- Instructional Coaching and Support
- Male Educators of Color Fellowship (MECF)
- Equity Academy

2. Organizational and Individual Development

- School Quality Audits
- School Equity Audits
- Organizational Equity Audits

3. Family Support

- Connecting with Your Sons Workshops
- Fayola Man Support Fund

4. My Brother's Keeper Denver

- Entering School Ready to Learn
- Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade
- Graduate From High School
- Complete Post-Secondary Education or Training
- All Youth Out of School Are Employed
- Providing Second Chances

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Three pillars drive SFF's programs, services, mission, and values: Building Awareness, Building Equity by Design, and Building Capacity. Guided by these pillars, SFF offers the following programs:

1) Building Awareness

SFF seeks to empower young men and boys of color who have been silenced for too long to use their voices to share their experiences and challenges with stakeholders that are creating programs and policies that directly impact their lives. Through the Building Awareness Pillar, SFF provides the community and youth-serving ecosystem with first-hand experiences of young men and boys of color. The goal is for youth-serving organizations that work with this population to use these experiences to guide the development of their programs and services.

- **The Boys Are Talking Forum** provides boys and young men of color with the space and opportunity to engage directly with education and community leaders to discuss the obstacles they face and the support systems and resources that help them succeed. The forum engages 15 boys and 300 stakeholders each year. The young men then continued participating in SFF's mentoring programming through May of the following year. SFF also makes relevant white papers, research, and articles available and easily accessible to the general public to supplement this forum.

2) Building capacity

SFF provides targeted and tailored solutions to organizations that want to increase their capacity to deliver their services through an equity lens. Under this pillar, SFF conducts organizational equity audits, program design services, individual coaching, and capacity-building workshops. We do this work with other nonprofits, for-profits, and schools (including traditional, private, and charter schools). The Building Capacity Pillar serves youth service professionals, young men, and parents.

Workshops include:

For Youth Professionals

- *Working with Boys of Color Workshop Series*: Builds the capacity of youth service professionals who impact the lives of young men and boys of color using videos, activities,

coaching, real-world scenarios, movement-based activities, songs, laughter, and sometimes tears, increasing the capacity of participants to improve the outcomes of this group by creating environments and experiences for young men and boys of color that are designed through an equity lens.

- *Hardwired by Nature: School/Program Design Through an Equity Lens*: SFF provides school and program design support to increase participants' awareness of equity opportunities and their capacity to design equitable spaces and experiences for students of color. This powerful workshop has impacted more than 6000 teachers, administrators, and policymakers, among others.
- *SFF Equity Academy*: The Sims-Fayola Foundation Equity Academy is a program designed to increase the capacity of educators and other youth service professionals to deliver quality learning and programming experiences for students of color and to build authentic relationships through an equity lens by engaging them in the deep soul-searching work of understanding their own racial and equity disposition. Participants include educators, counselors, school resource officers, law enforcement, mentors, youth mentoring organizations, youth-serving organizations, corporate diversity officers, etc. Over 12 sessions, we increase the capacity of our participants to deliver a quality learning experience in the classroom, in mentoring programs, or other types of programming through an equity and cultural lens.
- *Male Educators of Color Fellowship (MECF)*: In alignment with other initiatives around the nation like Man Up, InDemand, Call Me MISTER, and Black Male Educators for Social Justice, MECF seeks to increase the diversity of Metro Denver's and Colorado Spring's teacher workforces to reflect the students better they serve by increasing the number of Black and Brown male educators in these school systems, respectively. Programming aims to recruit, retain, and support male educators of color in the first three years of their careers. Diverse professional development opportunities exist for Colorado educators, including educators of color, but none are designed specifically for male educators of color. Low pay, compounded by school environments rife with microaggressions from students, teachers, and administrators alike, creates recruitment and retention challenges, contributing to the severe lack of male educators of color in Colorado (Chalkbeat, 2020).

For Parents

- *Connecting with Your Sons*: SFF also recognizes the critical role parents play in young men's lives and offers *Connecting with Your Sons* a series of active two-hour workshops that help parents learn more about the uniqueness of their boys. Moving effortlessly between the practical and the political, these workshops tackle social and cultural issues facing young men and boys of color and how to challenge schools and the media to see boys fully and fairly.

For the Young Men

SFF's student programming directly engages boys and young men of color in various opportunities to empower them to align their futures with their aspirations.

Programs include:

- ***Empowered Ambition Youth Development (EAYD) Program***: A best practice and evidence-informed social-emotional and character development initiative for young men in 4th to 12th grades that equips them with the skills needed to make their futures look like their dreams. The EAYD Program engages young men in deep, reflective work using restorative practices, mental wellness, positive cultural identity, social and emotional learning (SEL) tenants, conflict resolution, mentoring, and goal-setting practices. This program can be implemented over one semester or the entire school year. The curriculum is grounded in Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the best practices of mentoring, mentoring young men of color, positive racial identity, and culturally aligned pedagogical practices.
- ***Fayola Man Summer Leadership Academy***: Fayola Academy is a four-week leadership camp for young men in grades 6-12. Fayola Academy is designed to focus on improving the life outcomes of young men by engaging them in social-emotional skill development, mental and physical wellness, entrepreneurship, character development, financial literacy, STEM activities, leadership, and academic readiness. Partnering with other community-based organizations, we provide young men with the tools to make their futures look like their dreams.
- ***The Fayola Man Career Academy***: For 15 weeks in the Fall and 15 weeks in the Spring, we expose young men and boys of color to careers, industries, and experiences that people of color underrepresented. During the summer, our team identifies careers and industries that are underrepresented by people of color and form win-win partnerships that provide our young men exposure and access and provide pipeline cultivation, opportunities for paid internships, and opportunities for shadow days for our industry partners. We have partnered with Oil and Gas, Drone Aviation, Airport Management, Aviation, Robotics, Jewelry, Outdoor Career, Equestrian, Financial, Law Enforcement (FBI), Professional Golf, Media, Politics/Public Service, and Manufacturing industries. For three hour sessions, the young men and their parents engage in a pre-planned experience with the hosting industry at their site to learn about the industry in general, and career opportunities within the industry, engage in a hands-on OJT experience, and have a Q&A lunch with the industry host. Afterward, our foundation provides the young men with a survey that allows them to give us feedback on their experience and new learnings and rate their interest in that industry as a career. We follow up with the host for internship and shadow opportunities when interest is indicated. If an internship or shadow opportunity arises, we provide transportation if needed.
- ***Community Mentoring Program***: The Community Mentorship Program (CMP) is our mentoring program for young men and boys of color from the general community. CMP is an in-person mentoring program focused on leadership and character development, restorative

principles, positive racial and academic identity, and social-emotional learning (SEL) for young men between 9-18. Mentors and mentees meet monthly for three hours over 12 months.

- Community Virtual Mentoring Program: The Community Virtual Mentorship Program (CVMP) is our mentoring program for young men and boys of color from the general community. CVMP is an online mentoring program focused on leadership and character development, restorative principles, positive racial and academic identity, and social-emotional learning (SEL) for young men between 9-18. Mentors and mentees meet twice monthly over 12 months.

- Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone (SFEZ): SFEZ is designed to serve justice-involved and community-referred males of color between the ages of 11-25 with social-emotional skill development and positive race and cultural identity. Our goal is to improve life outcomes, reduce engagement with the criminal justice system, widen career exposure, and provide healthy relationships through mentoring and support from other men of color participating in this program. The overarching goal of our Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone is to assist young and adult males in increasing their capacity to be better stewards of their choices, careers, mental wellness, and ultimately their lives while developing into positive, culturally aware, and emotionally healthy individuals. The SFEZ program is an effective tool that encompasses the SEL components needed to regulate and control emotions and behaviors. Research supports the importance of utilizing an effective school based SEL program early to enhance academics and behavior. The core of the SFEZ is based on the concept and principles of positive youth development (PYD). Traditionally, youth justice interventions focused on youth offenders' problems and deficits. In recent years, there has been a shift towards responding to youth offenders' behaviors using the concepts and principles of PYD. PYD posits that a youth's negative trajectory can be altered by promoting positive developmental opportunities. Compelling evidence concludes that an effective SEL program will yield positive outcomes such as college entrance and graduation, positive personal and professional relationships, overall health, behavior, and career accomplishment. A positive youth justice model aims to leverage strengths and promote protective factors, while also addressing risks and vulnerabilities. The Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone will be a model that focuses on the young men's assets as much as their growth areas.

3) Building Equity by Design

SFF provides various services to support the development and growth of programs and schools through an equity lens. We also offer a variety of diversity, equity, and inclusion services (Equity Audits & Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Workshops) to help organizations increase their capacity to deliver equitable workspaces and practices that are considerate of their diverse workforce.

- My Brother's Keeper Denver: Far more than community building, mentoring, and creating partnerships, MBK is a clarion call to "disrupt and rebuild" America and change historically unequal systems to ensure America becomes a place where you can make it if you try. In September 2014, President Obama issued a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and tribal nations across the country to accept the MBK Community Challenge.

The MBK Community Challenge encourages communities to implement a coherent, place-based cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. In 2023, Denver's Mayor, Michael Hancock, transferred the responsibility to lead the efforts of MBK from the Office of Children's Affairs to the Sims-Fayola Foundation. The Sims-Fayola Foundation now serves as the backbone organization charged to lead, drive, support, and facilitate the work of My Brother's Keeper with the many other Community-Based Organizations working to drive change for young men and boys of color in Denver. With this transition, the Sims-Fayola Foundation will transition from a singularly focused nonprofit to a collective impact organization that strategically includes and leverages multiple kinds of stakeholders to impact the outcomes of young men and boys of color in Denver.

KEY ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND OUR IMPACT

Theory of Change

By addressing the root causes of societal inequities and institutional barriers, the Sims-Fayola Foundation will improve the life outcomes of young men of color. The foundation creates an inclusive and supportive environment for these young men and boys through direct programming and catalyzing systems change. By collaborating with schools, community organizations, city agencies, and policymakers, the foundation aims to transform policies, practices, and the allocation of resources. As a result, this collaborative approach creates a transformative and systemic shift. That shift benefits individuals in their immediate ecosystem and contributes to broader societal change, equity, and increased access to the support(s) needed for young men of color to reach their individual and collective full potential.

SFF measures its impact against its overall mission to improve the life outcomes of boys and young men of color and increase the positive impact made by those who work with them in their schools and communities. Over ten years, SFF has impacted more than 16,000 boys and young men of color and more than 6,000 educators, mentors, parents, and advocates.

SFF uses pre, mid, and post surveys and qualitative monitoring notes to measure programming impact, but also to drive applicable curriculum and pedagogical changes when needed. SFF also engages with a 3rd party evaluation company, Brigham & Associates, to help analyze performance data and to tell the story of our impact in a mixed-methods format.

SFF's key organizational objectives are to:

- Increase positive racial and academic identity among young men and boys of color.
- Improve support structures for young men and boys of color.
- Enhance the ability to self-regulate for young men and boys of color in various societal contexts.
- Improve life outcomes and experiences for young men and boys of color.

- Enhance self-regulation skills among men enrolled in adult diversion programs.
- Improve goal-setting abilities among participants.
- Promote culturally responsive and relevant support for participants.
- Improve access and opportunity from cradle to career for young men and boys of color.

Performance Indicators:

- Percentage increase in positive racial and academic identity among participants.
- Number of improved support structures (e.g., mentorship programs, community resources) established for participants.
- SEL skills assessment scores before and after program participation.
- Long-term outcomes include increases in educational attainment, employment rates, and overall life satisfaction.

16K+

Young men impacted

60%

Reduction in suspensions, truancies & negative discipline referrals associated with violence

6K

Youth service professionals supported

CURRENT PLANNING FOR FUTURE IMPACT

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Male Educators of Color Fellowship

In alignment with other initiatives around the nation like Man Up, InDemand, Call Me MISTER, and Black Male Educators for Social Justice, The Fellowship, seeks to increase the diversity of Metro Denver and Colorado Springs teacher workforces to reflect the students better they serve by increasing the number of Black and Brown male educators in these school systems, respectively. This underrepresentation of Black teachers means Black students miss out on boosts to their academic performance as studies have shown that Black students have Black teachers do better in school. White females constitute 83% of the U.S. elementary teaching force, Black educators make up less than 6% of teachers, and less than 2% of that 6% are Black men (Johns, 2016). Research shows that when Black students have one Black teacher by 3rd grade, they are 13% more likely to enroll in college. With two Black teachers in the mix early on, that stat jumps to 32%. For Black boys from low-income households, their on-time high school graduation rate soars by 40% (Center for Black Educator Development, n.d.). Kunjufu (2002) cites research that finds a 4% increase in student test scores when the teacher is of the same race, suggesting possible statistically significant implications of more teachers of color entering

and remaining in the workforce. Teachers that understand communities of color's cultures are needed to improve the educational outcomes of students of color.

By engaging multi-level stakeholders, SFF takes a strategic, transformative approach to combat systemic violence and dismantle the barriers that marginalize young men and boys of color.

SFF measures its impact against its overall mission to improve the lives of boys and young men of color and increase the positive effects of those who work with them in their schools and communities. Through the development of an evidence-based, year-long Fellowship for male educators of color, SFF intends to achieve the following outcomes and results:

- **RECRUIT.** Increase **recruitment** of male educators of color by creating a support system to meet their unique needs. For year one of the fellowship, our goal is to work with Denver Metro area schools (charter networks and traditional districts) to **recruit five new male educators of color** to the Denver area.
- **SUSTAIN.** Increase **retention** of male educators of color by creating a community committed to supporting one another. For year one of the fellowship, our goal is to **retain 90% of the fellows in the teaching field** by increasing participants' **confidence and craft skills**.
- **SUPPORT.** Establish a **pathway of support** to increase participants' knowledge of evidence- and equity-based pedagogical approaches to teaching youth of color, specifically focusing on young men and boys of color. For year one of the fellowship, **our goal is for each fellow to demonstrate proficiency in five areas of culturally relevant pedagogy using the Sims Framework for Academic Achievement of Boys of Color (SFAABC).**

SFF has recently raised the funding to develop a year-long fellowship for male educators of color in their first three years of teaching to increase recruitment and retention and provide them with support in the Denver Metro area. The fellowship aims to recruit, sustain and support male educators of color in the Denver and Colorado Springs metro areas. For White students, student-teacher congruence has proven productive and beneficial academically. However, on the other hand, teacher ethnic incongruence, especially for young men and boys of color, appears to be disadvantageous for students of color in relation to achievement and graduation (Dee, 2004).

In 2016, the Denver Mayor's Office, Donnell Kay Foundation, and other local foundations partnered with Denver Public Schools to launch the Make Your Mark initiative and accelerate the hiring and retention of teachers and leaders of color. The program recruited more than two dozen teachers of color, creating a support network to combat feelings of isolation and invisibility. With the program no longer operating, SFF intends to continue the city initiative's work, extending its expertise and experience working within the education system to create a sustainable and scalable support network for male teachers of color within the first three years of their careers. By providing these male educators with capacity-building support, mentorship, and resources, SFF is working to change the narrative within the system for this group.

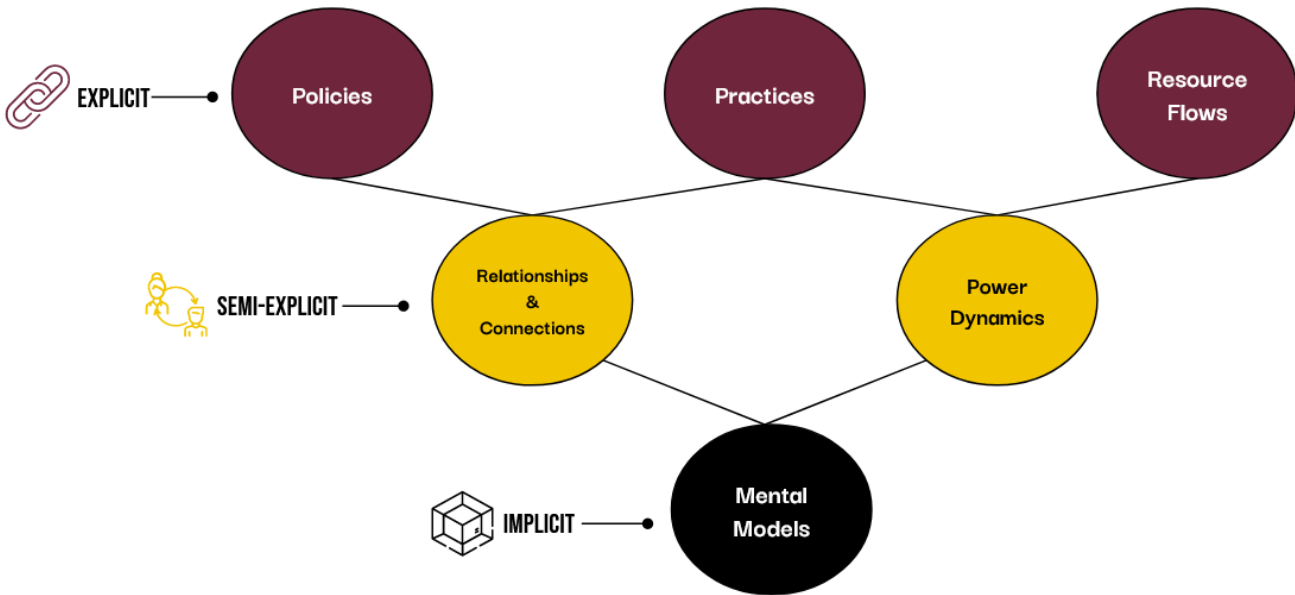
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone

With a recent multi-year grant from the Caring for Denver Foundation, SFF is within an implementation timeline to launch our Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone to support men, young men, and boys of color in the Denver community who are involved in the criminal system and the social services system. Over 18 weeks, the Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone (SFEZ) will support young men and men of color between the ages of 11 – 25 who are enrolled in our program to address the lack of social-emotional skill development, positive self, and cultural identity that lead to self and community violence, dysregulated behaviors, unhealthy relationships with substances, and engagement with the criminal justice system. Our goal is to improve life outcomes, reduce engagement with the criminal justice system, widen career exposure, and provide healthy relationships through mentoring from other men to young men of color participating in this program. Youth involved in the justice system often have a constellation of complex problems and risk factors. Aiming to reduce risk factors is insufficient; it is essential to promote the development of protective factors. Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs enhance intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies. A growing body of research demonstrates that SEL programs reduce aggression, substance use, and emotional distress and improve prosocial skills. There is also mounting evidence that school-based SEL programs significantly increase coping and communication skills, positive attitudes, prosocial behavior, and academic performance and decrease aggression, substance use, and emotional distress. However, SEL programs have been primarily implemented in community schools. Our EAYD program is a school-based program that has had phenomenal results. Unfortunately, many justice-involved youths are truant, disengaged, or dropped out of school. Based on the literature describing the risk factors for justice involvement (e.g., poor social skills, poor problem solving, limited emotion regulation strategies), it is conceivable that these youth would significantly benefit from developing SEL skills. The Sims-Fayola Empowerment Zone will be a community program that can be accessed by any young man in Denver and those that are justice-involved and need this as an alternative to sentencing or diversion option.

The countless complex intertwined barriers weighing on the lives of young men and boys of color cannot be alleviated through siloed approaches focused on external challenges. Change requires deep, intentional reflection, dedication to ongoing growth, and trusting collaboration between young men and boys of color and a vast network of people who influence their lives. SFF takes a transformative approach to help shift the narrative and plant the seeds needed to create sustainable change. We continue to work to secure funding that will empower SFF with greater reach and influence, allowing it to mount an even greater defense against the systemic violence boys and young men of color battle every day.

6 Conditions of System Changes



Waters, J., & Fisher, R. (2020). The Waters of Change Framework: A Reflective Toolkit for Systems Change. Retrieved from <https://watersofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Waters-of-Change-Reflective-Toolkit.pdf>

1. **Policies:** By engaging with policymakers, the mission aims to influence and transform policies that promote educational opportunities and remove institutional barriers for young men and boys of color. This involves advocating for policies that promote inclusivity and support their needs.
2. **Practices:** The mission seeks to transform existing practices by working with schools, community organizations, and city agencies. Through collaborative partnerships, the goal is to implement practices that create an inclusive and supportive environment for young men and boys of color.
3. **Resource Flows:** By catalyzing systems change, the mission aims to address resource disparities that may exist for young men and boys of color. This involves ensuring equitable distribution and access to resources that are necessary for their success and well-being.
4. **Relationships and Connections:** The mission emphasizes collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders, including schools, community organizations, and policymakers. By building strong relationships and connections, the mission seeks to create a network of support that can collectively work towards achieving its objectives.

5. Power Dynamics: The mission recognizes the importance of addressing power dynamics that contribute to inequities. By empowering young men and boys of color and working to change systems, the mission aims to challenge and transform power imbalances that hinder their success.

6. Mental Models: The mission seeks to challenge and change existing mental models or beliefs that perpetuate inequities. By adopting an equity and gender lens, the mission aims to shift societal perceptions and attitudes towards young men and boys of color, ultimately leading to broader societal change in equity.

Overall, this mission statement recognizes the interconnectedness of these six conditions and aims to create a systemic shift that addresses the root causes of inequities and barriers for young men and boys of color.



The Sims-Fayola Foundation, as the new backbone organization for My Brother's Keeper Denver (MBKD), is poised to lead the largest citywide collective impact effort focused on strengthening the city's youth-serving ecosystem, with an emphasis on young men and boys of color and improving their outcomes at scale. Ultimately, we aim to affect systems change by centering equity of access and opportunity in all that we do. The Sims-Fayola Foundation will leverage the power of data, our knowledge of the youth-serving ecosystem, and our relationships with grassroots and grassroots stakeholders to identify and support solutions, aligned with four key areas and the six overarching My Brother's Keeper milestones, that drive positive community and systems level outcomes for the Denver metro area's young men and boys of color.

The four key areas are:

Nonprofit Organization Development & Support

The My Brother's Keeper Denver chapter is committed to fostering the growth and success of smaller nonprofits by offering comprehensive services and support in development capacity

building. Through targeted initiatives, we aim to enhance organizational effectiveness, broaden community impact, and empower these nonprofits to secure increased funding. Our dedicated efforts will create a collaborative environment where smaller organizations can thrive, ensuring a stronger, more resilient community for all.

Convening for Practice & Policy Impact

The My Brother's Keeper Denver chapter is dedicated to catalyzing positive change for young men of color in the Denver metro area. Through visionary leadership, we will convene local action tables around one or more of the 6 overarching MBK milestones, fostering collaboration among community stakeholders. These gatherings will serve as dynamic platforms for discussions on practice and policy, aiming to drive impactful initiatives that uplift and empower young men of color. By uniting our collective wisdom and resources, we aspire to create lasting change and advocate for policies that enhance the well-being and opportunities of these young individuals within our community.

Technical Assistance Funding

The My Brother's Keeper Denver chapter is dedicated to empowering small nonprofits through strategic technical assistance funding. Our support extends to capacity building in crucial areas such as program design, theories of change, program evaluation and monitoring, and grounding frameworks. Additionally, we offer fee-for-service back-office support to provide an extra layer of resources. Our goal is not only to enhance the capabilities of these nonprofits but also to establish a program quality control mechanism. Through technical assistance funding, we aim to create a robust framework for nonprofits aspiring to join the MBK Denver Affiliate Network, ensuring a standard of excellence and effectiveness in our collective efforts to uplift and empower our community.

Professional Development

The My Brother's Keeper Denver chapter is committed to advancing the professional development of nonprofit leaders and program staff dedicated to serving young men of color. We recognize the crucial role these individuals play in our community's well-being. Therefore, we provide targeted opportunities for role and program capacity-building, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to operate with efficiency and effectiveness. Our professional development initiatives aim to empower these leaders, fostering a network of professionals dedicated to driving positive change and ensuring the success and well-being of young men of color in the Denver metro area.

The Six MBK Milestones:

1. **Getting A Healthy Start & Entering School Ready to Learn:** All children should have a healthy start and enter school ready-cognitively, physically, socially
2. **Reading At Grade Level by Third Grade:** All children should be reading at grade level by age 8 – the age at which reading to learn becomes essential.

3. **Graduating From High School Ready for College & Career:** All youth should receive a quality high school education and graduate with the skills and tools needed to advance to postsecondary education or training.
4. **Completing Postsecondary Education or Training:** Every American should have the option to attend postsecondary education and receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow.
5. **Successfully Entering the Workforce:** Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.
6. **Keeping Kids on Track and Giving Them Second Chances:** All youth and young adults should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training, and treatment they need for a second chance.

Each part of this work is grounded in the driving values of the MBK framework. The driving values are:

- **CENTERING THE VOICES OF BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR:** We believe in intentionally including the voices, ideas, wants, desires, and needs of the very populations we seek to impact. We believe BYMOC and their caring support and partners are brilliant contributors to their success. “Nothing about us without us”.
- **COLLABORATIVE APPROACH:** We believe that the best way to close the equity gap for boys and young men of color is a collaborative approach to address the challenges facing boys and young men. We believe everyone has a role to play in ensuring all of our nation’s young people have equal access to opportunity. We must bring local governments, school systems, community-based organizations, philanthropy, businesses, and individuals together to help boys and young men of color thrive.
- **EVIDENCED-BASED SOLUTIONS:** We believe that evidence-based solutions and data-informed decisions are the best way to ensure that boys and young men of color have the opportunity to succeed.
- **EQUITY-DRIVEN:** We believe that race should not predict one’s success. We believe success is an option for everyone and institutional and structural inequity must be eliminated.
- **POLICY FOCUS:** We believe the driving forces behind many disparities facing BYMOC are the institutions that create an environment where institutional and structural racism can thrive. To make progress on complex social conditions for BYMOC, we must not only develop new and creative programs but address institutional and legislative policies that maintain the status quo.
- **SYSTEMS CHANGE:** We believe in addressing inequity through changing core institutions that maintain systems of oppression and opportunity.

- **GENERATIONAL IMPACT:** We believe in developing strategies that have a generational impact on communities to ensure lasting change and a shift in generational outcomes within a community.
- **OUTCOMES DRIVEN:** We believe in an outcomes-driven approach that uses data to continuously inform strategies and decisions and focuses on population-level results.

The Sims-Fayola Foundation’s work has always been focused on where young men and boys of color live, learn, and work. Over the past nine years, we have created student and adult-focused programs, experiences, and processes that have had a demonstrable, measurable, and positive impact on lives of the young men and boys of color, directly and indirectly. Our overarching goal is to help transform not only the young men, but also systems so that they work together to ensure greater access, equity, and opportunity.

