



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## My Brother's Keeper Newark joins Newark Opportunity Youth Network: MBKN to further advocacy arm of OYN

**Newark, New Jersey --** The Newark chapter of My Brother's Keeper (MBKN) announced an official merger today with Newark Opportunity Youth Network (Newark OYN). As part of Newark OYN, MBKN will lead policy and advocacy initiatives directly connected to the Newark OYN community—16- to 24-year-olds who lack access to school, training or regular jobs—a segment of the population often referred to as opportunity youth. Thanks to relationships with My Brother's Keeper Alliance, Prudential Financial, Inc. and other community-based advocacy groups, Newark OYN and MBKN will work together to create pathways for Newark's youth, as well as the 123,000 opportunity youth across New Jersey.

"This partnership aims to give voice and opportunity to a hidden demographic, elevate the issues of this population and provide access to quality opportunities that will activate our young people," said Robert Clark, Founder and CEO of Newark OYN. "Together, we will work toward dimensional solutions to the challenges they face. It's a perfect alliance."

Newark OYN is committed to helping young people by offering them alternative education programs, on-the-job training and a support system that lasts long after graduation. Policy advocacy remains a priority, alongside the network's focus on designing education programs. Through this merger, MBKN will address legislative barriers that affect the Newark OYN population, while also engaging young adults in opportunities to help them be vocal advocates of change they want to see in their community.



“Newark was one of the first communities to accept President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Community Challenge in 2014, and I’m thrilled to see the city continue to grow and strengthen this critical work,” said Michael D. Smith, Executive Director of MBK Alliance at the Obama Foundation. “By focusing in this next phase on opportunity youth, the vast majority of whom are young men of color, MBK Newark will help highlight the urgent importance of ensuring clear pathways to opportunity for underserved youth to our communities and the country.”

MBKN was established in 2014 when Newark Mayor Ras Baraka’s office accepted the Call to Action from My Brother’s Keeper Alliance. Since its inception, Mayor Baraka has remained a vocal advocate of its initiatives and programs.

“In 2014, President Obama established the My Brother’s Keeper initiative to improve outcomes and tackle persistent opportunity gaps and challenges to ensure that all young people can reach their full potential in America. I am proud to carry on this important work with Newark MBK and OYN. Together, their collective voice will continue to move Newark forward and create sustainable solutions that speak to the needs and priorities of our community,” Mayor Baraka stated.

Shané Harris, Vice President of Corporative Giving at Prudential and President of the Prudential Foundation said, “We see the untapped potential of the 7,000 opportunity youth in Newark as key to the city’s financial wellness. Working together, My Brother’s Keeper Newark and the Newark Opportunity Youth Network will help build supportive career pathways for young men of color in our community.”