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More sponsors for 'My Brother's Keeper'

By [Justin Sink](#)

The National Basketball Association and AT&T are among the corporate sponsors that have committed to helping young minority men as part of the White House's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, President Obama is scheduled to announce Monday afternoon.

The president will hold a town hall session where he'll field questions from children at a Washington, D.C., elementary school, and announce a fresh slate of private-sector commitments to support the program.

The NBA, in coordination with its players association, will launch a five-year effort designed to connect 25,000 mentors with young men of color. The league will work with at-risk students to improve attendance and performance at schools. Current and former players will also participate in after school workshops designed to help vulnerable children.

Separately, AT&T announced that it would pledge \$18 million this year to support mentoring programs. And the Emerson Collective, a nonprofit organization founded by the widow of Steve Jobs, has committed \$50 million for a competition to "find and develop the best designs for next generation high schools," the White House said.

Discovery Communications had pledged \$1 million to create a special programming event to educate the public on the challenges faced by minority men and boys. And the Citi Foundation is committing \$10 million over three years to underwrite volunteer programs in 10 cities designed to increase college preparedness for minority populations.

Additionally, NBA hall-of-famer Magic Johnson and Deloitte CEO Joe Echevarria will launch a new "National Convening Council" designed to bring together business, philanthropic, and faith leaders to coordinate their efforts to help young men of color.

And 60 of the nation's largest school districts have signed on to a plan designed to better support that population by expanding access to preschool, implementing "early warning" systems to monitor academic progress, reduce suspensions and expulsion, and increase access to honors and AP classes. The College Board, which administers the AP exams, is pledging \$1.5 million to help schools enroll minority students in AP classes.

The "My Brother's Keeper" program has been a centerpiece of the president's "pen and phone" strategy, in which Obama has sought to bypass Congress by convening the private sector and taking administrative action. In May, Obama called on all members of the administration to volunteer to mentor at-risk youth. And in February, Obama announced \$200 million in

philanthropic commitments designed to improve child development and school readiness, parenting and parent engagement, literacy, and school discipline reform.

During the announcement in May, Obama said he was "reminded that I am only here because a bunch of folks invested in me."

"We've got a huge number of kids out there who have as much talent, and more talent than I had, but nobody is investing in them," he said. "And I want to make sure that I use this platform, and every Cabinet member here wants to make sure that they use the tools that they've got, so that these young men, young boys, know somebody cares about them, somebody is thinking about them, and that they can succeed, and making America stronger as a consequence."