

network stories

UP Partnership - San Antonio, Texas



UP Partnership | San Antonio, Texas

context

In San Antonio, Texas, fewer young people are unnecessarily pushed into the juvenile justice system and more youth are being connected to resources instead. This change began in 2018, when My Brother's Keeper San Antonio (MBKSA) —a network of UP Partnership in San Antonio, Texas —started work to decriminalize curfew violations in their city.

takeaways

UP Partnership found that an important factor in successful policy change was sharing data with key decision makers. The emphasis on data has continued beyond the enacted policy change and has informed their work with their community. San Antonio's county justice system now has data-sharing agreements with several local school districts, connecting two systems that previously didn't interact. UP Partnership's data team works with school districts to assist them in tracking data, and the county provides UP Partnership with quarterly data. UP Partnership can then match the county data with school district data to determine which students need more wraparound supports. Additional work for young people in San Antonio has grown out of this policy work in the form of restorative justice practices. UP Partnership's current strategy integrates restorative justice practices into nine schools in three school districts through the *Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice* pilot program. Even in an academic year affected by COVID-19, their *restorative justice efforts* have been successful. UP Partnership recognizes that the curfew ordinance change was an amazing step toward new opportunities for young people in their community.



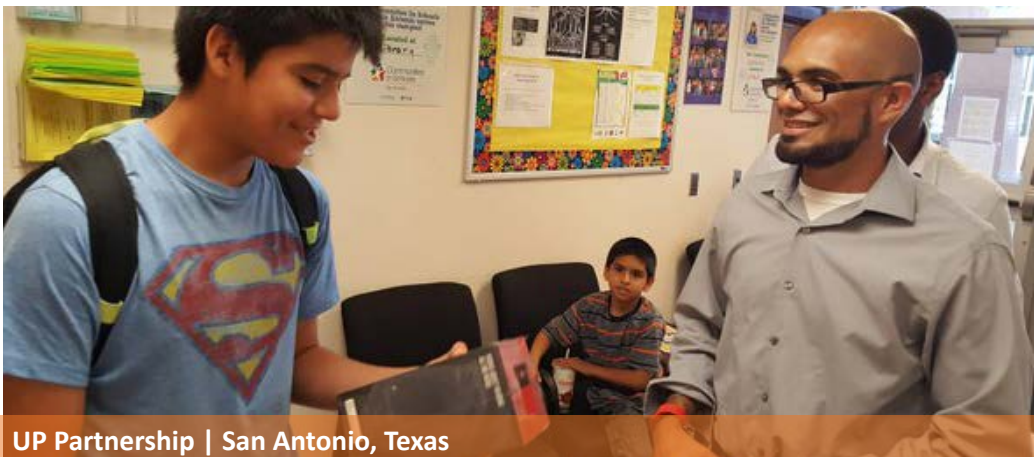
actions

Before 2018, youth violating San Antonio’s curfew ordinance could receive Class C misdemeanor tickets. These tickets required them to report to municipal court, rather than juvenile court, where they could face fines of up to \$500 and the possibility of a criminal record without guaranteed legal representation.

When the city revisited the youth curfew ordinance in 2018, MBKSA presented data to the city council demonstrating the ordinance’s disproportionate impact on young people of color. They also communicated research that links early involvement in the juvenile justice system and future incarceration. When reflecting on the city’s curfew ordinance, *MBKSA Chairman Akeem Brown* said, “It doesn’t promote positive interactions between young men of color, or young people in general, with police officers and law enforcement.” The ordinance’s goal was to minimize the likelihood of kids becoming victims of crime or participating in illegal activity, but it unintentionally victimized young people working early in the morning or after school.

MBKSA took specific advocacy actions in their campaign to change the ordinance, including:

- Researching other communities with similar ordinances
- Creating a shared letter of support
- Drafting a proposed resolution as a network
- Establishing shared talking points and messaging for approaching the mayor and city council members



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results

MBKSA and UP Partnership’s campaign for change was a success, and in 2018, San Antonio decriminalized curfew violations. Additionally, young people are now connected to re-engagement centers, which are working to reengage the 34,000 young people between ages 16 and 24 who are disconnected from school or work, a group UP Partnership calls Opportunity Youth.

This policy shift was a step toward directly supporting Opportunity Youth by both helping them to avoid contact with the juvenile justice system and connecting them with high school, postsecondary and/or career resources. UP Partnership worked with the City of San Antonio’s Department of Human Resources on a [*policy report*](#), released in 2019, that provides more information on San Antonio’s Opportunity Youth and the support they need. Additionally, the [*data resources page*](#) on UP Partnership’s website provides extensive data surrounding the needs of and resources available to young people in their community.