



Florida Gang Reduction Strategy 2008 - 2012

Office of the Attorney General
Bill McCollum



STATE OF FLORIDA

BILL MCCOLLUM
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Dear Fellow Citizens:

The increase in gang activity in the State of Florida over the last several years has been alarming, posing a serious threat to the safety and well being of our families and communities.

In October, 2007, I announced a collaborative effort initiated by our agency to develop a Statewide Gang Reduction Strategy. In conjunction with that initiative, an Executive Group comprised of the heads of all state agencies with responsibilities for law enforcement, children and state law enforcement associations came together to formulate this strategy. In December, 2007, our office hosted a two-day Gang Reduction Strategy Summit for community leaders, prevention/intervention organizations and law enforcement heads to work on this strategy here at the Capitol in Tallahassee.

The goal in bringing together this Executive Group and hosting the Summit was to combine the many great resources of talented experts in order to develop a thoughtful and deliberative Statewide Gang Reduction Strategy. The long-range plan was to produce a comprehensive outline to include efforts to educate youth, make prevention/intervention more effective, improve law enforcement, address re-entry issues and dramatically reduce gang membership and gang-related activities throughout Florida.

Through our combined efforts, we have put together a strategy that can be implemented in our communities through all areas of state and local law enforcement, education and intervention/prevention resources. I am pleased to share this information with you and look forward to continuing our work to protect our state from the threat of gangs and gang violence. Together, we can reach our mutual goal of suppressing and deterring future gang activity.

Thank you for supporting our efforts as we continue to develop programs and resources to help combat this growing threat in our endeavor to make Florida a safer place for our families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill McCollum".

Bill McCollum
Attorney General

Executive Summary

Introduction and Executive Summary

Criminal gangs steal and destroy property, sell drugs to our children and commit acts of violence and brutality that threaten the safety and security of our citizens. The number of gangs and gang members has been growing steadily in Florida for years. For far too long efforts to address gang problems in Florida have been left to local law enforcement and community leaders with minimal federal and state support and no statewide strategy.

In the summer of 2007, at the request of the Attorney General, the heads of affected state agencies and law enforcement associations gathered to address this issue and formulate a statewide strategy to combat gangs. Those participating in this executive group were:

The Attorney General; Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections; Executive Director of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice; Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families; Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education; Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control; Director of the Florida Highway Patrol; President of the Florida Sheriffs Association; President of the Florida Police Chiefs Association; and President of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association.

In December 2007, at the suggestion of this executive group, the Office of the Attorney General convened a summit of interested community leaders from around the state to help develop a statewide strategy. This document is the product of the efforts of the executive group and the participants in this summit.

The mission of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy is to increase the safety of the citizens of Florida by empowering Florida's youth to reject criminal gangs as a viable option and by substantially reducing gang-related crime and violence in Florida.

The goals to accomplish this mission are:

1. Stop the growth of criminal gangs in Florida
2. Reduce the number of gangs and gang members
3. Render gangs ineffectual

To meet these goals and accomplish the mission the strategy is built on three pillars:

- Prevention/Intervention
- Law Enforcement
- Rehabilitation and Re-entry

The key to the success of the strategy is coordination and cooperation among federal, state and local governments, law enforcement, elected officials, community leaders and the business community. In order to empower Florida's youth to reject criminal gangs as a viable option a coordinated and cooperative effort of all parties must be focused on the same basic objectives.

Prevention/Intervention Objectives:

- Objective 1: Expose Florida's gangs and their activities for their violent and destructive reality.
- Objective 2: Educate youth, parents and other mentoring adults to help Florida's youth reject gang involvement.
- Objective 3: Mobilize communities to repel gang appeal to Florida's youth.
- Objective 4: Provide effective prevention/intervention programs for those youth who are the most likely targets of gang recruitment and identified young gang members.
- Objective 5: Encourage and assist the creation of positive extracurricular activities and workforce development programs for Florida's at-risk youth.
- Objective 6: Support existing and new community groups/coalitions that take a stand against criminal gangs.

The strategy recommends that in addition to local gang prevention/intervention coalitions there be the formation of regional gang prevention/intervention and suppression task forces to share information and coordinate efforts at both the prevention/intervention and law enforcement level. Members of these regional gang task forces should include representatives of federal, state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, the judiciary, juvenile justice, schools, area prevention/intervention programs, local government, and religious and community leaders.

Law Enforcement Objectives:

- Objective 1: Compile a statewide priority list and target every major criminal gang in Florida for dismantling by arresting and prosecuting gang leaders and key gang members.
- Objective 2: Identify and target for arrest and prosecution all gang kingpins in Florida and seek life imprisonment sentences.
- Objective 3: Prioritize the prosecution of gun crimes related to gangs and gang members and target for prosecution those who provide guns to juvenile gang members ineligible to own or possess a gun.
- Objective 4: In areas of intense gang activity, build community policing, remove firearms from low to mid-level gang members and use injunctive powers to prohibit gang members from gathering.
- Objective 5: Improve intelligence gathering and information sharing on gangs and gang members and their activities among and between federal, state and local law enforcement, prosecuting authorities, schools and Juvenile Justice, Corrections, and Children and Families officials.
- Objective 6: Strengthen gang law enforcement and prosecution with more uniform, specialized training and designate one Assistant State Attorney in each judicial circuit whose sole, full-time responsibility is to prosecute and manage the prosecution of gangs, gang members and gang related crimes.
- Objective 7: Coordinate federal, state and local law enforcement/prosecution efforts toward the common objective of combating gang activity in Florida including setting priorities and targeting certain gangs, gang activities and gang related prosecutions all over Florida.

Rehabilitation and Re-entry Objectives:

- Objective 1: Expand opportunities for criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems to participate in prison industry programs, educational programs, faith and character-based programs, drug treatment/rehabilitation programs and all other programs designed to rehabilitate offenders or assist offenders in preparing for re-entry into society upon completion of their sentences.
- Objective 2: Develop and implement specialized, individualized counseling and mentoring focused on motivating criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems to gain educational, vocational or job training, social skills, and lifestyle interests and habits that will turn offenders away from gang membership/participation and toward becoming productive members of society when released.
- Objective 3: Provide job placement for criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems upon release and provide a counselor/mentor for each such released offender to give guidance, assist with acquiring and keeping a job, educational advancement, and building positive relationships outside of gangs for a period of five years after release.
- Objective 4: Require all identified criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems, upon release, to register with an identified state office and keep their address, contact information and job status current for ten years after release and require such released offender to report in person for counseling to a counselor/mentor at least quarterly for the first five years after release.
- Objective 5: Train and qualify the necessary number of counselors/mentors/teachers to accomplish the individualized goals of gang member rehabilitation and re-entry from state or county correctional systems.

The Florida Gang Reduction Strategy requires the collection and regular maintenance of solid data on gangs, gang members, prevention/intervention programs and monitoring and coordination of activities and initiatives designed to implement and effectuate the mission, goals and objectives of the strategy. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), The Florida Department of Corrections, The Florida Department of Education, The Florida Department of Children and Families, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, and many sheriffs' offices and police departments collect some data on gangs, gang members and gang activities. Unfortunately, this data is incomplete and to date there has been no comprehensive collation of data from these various sources into a usable form. There is a need to formulate a method whereby the data collected by these various agencies can be pooled to facilitate the objectives of this strategy. Similarly, the development of a statewide repository of resources with respect to prevention/intervention programs for at-risk youth or community/non-profit programs targeted at youth likely to be recruited into gangs would be beneficial to the furtherance of the strategy.

The 2007 FDLE survey of law enforcement and school resource officers shows that there are at least 1,500 gangs and over 65,000 gang members in Florida. According to Department of Corrections' officials, an analysis of inmate population indicates that all 67 Florida counties have gang

member representation in the prison system. Therefore the need for a statewide comprehensive database is critical to the success of the strategy. The current “FDLE Gang Database” program was established following an earlier recommendation of a statewide grand jury and is designed to capture information voluntarily submitted by local law enforcement on gangs and gang members. However, based upon reports from local agency officials, the majority of Florida’s law enforcement agencies are not using the state system for various reasons. The most common reason stated is the lack of interfaces that would allow this data to be electronically uploaded from their Records Management Systems (RMS) to the FDLE system, thus eliminating the need for duplicate entries into two systems. Chiefs and Sheriffs clearly indicate that they do not have the time, staff or desire to enter the data twice.

To implement the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy it will be necessary to create and maintain a group or body with a centralized office in the state to collect and collate data from all sources. This group will also coordinate and direct, where appropriate, federal, state and local actions for all three pillars of the strategy and measure success. For this purpose it was recommended that there be created a Coordinating Council on Gang Reduction Strategies to be chaired by the Attorney General and comprised of the heads of the following agencies: Commissioner of the Florida Department of Education, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families, Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, Director of the Florida Highway Patrol, President of the Florida Sheriffs Association, President of the Florida Police Chiefs Association and President of the Florida Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

Under this plan the Office of the Attorney General and the Coordinating Council would be responsible for coordinating, implementing, and measuring the progress of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy. The Office of the Attorney General and the Coordinating Council would seek the steadfast synchronization of gang reduction efforts throughout the state, building task forces, creating coalitions and assuring the flow of shared information and intelligence on gangs, gang members and progress on prevention/intervention and prisoner re-entry programs. It is anticipated that from time to time the Attorney General and the Coordinating Council will make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor to further efforts in implementing the Gang Reduction Strategy. It is also anticipated that there would be periodic summits in the various areas of the state to bring together community leaders to counsel on ways the strategy can be improved or the implementation furthered. These summits would be arranged and directed by the Attorney General and the Coordinating Council.

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Background: Extent of the Problem

Progression of Criminal Gangs in America

Criminal gangs have been prevalent in America since its beginning. The drastic changes that occurred with American lifestyles during the Industrial Revolution gave rise to the modern American gang. Notably, there was a high concentration of criminal gangs in 19th century New York City. The Five Points, a center of ethnic conflict in what is present day Manhattan, was a neighborhood where gangs with strong ethnic identities could grow and operate. Irish gangs had a solid hold on the Five Points, but gangs based on Polish, Italian and other ethnicities were also common.¹

The behaviors of the criminal gangs of that era were similar to the gangs we face in our communities today. Gangs fought over territory, robbed and mugged people and sometimes united to fight against gangs from other areas. Then, as now, their affects on the neighborhoods they touched were devastating.

During the 20th century America experienced a gradual increase in criminal gang activity. Throughout the 1950s and '60s, most criminal gangs were based in large metropolitan cities. Subsidiary gangs would be located outside the city in small suburban towns, while the development of an efficient road system and increasing high-speed transport availability assisted criminal gangs in their illegal activities.² As the highway system matured and suburban-America grew, criminal gangs were able to expand their activities into communities remote from larger metropolitan cities. Over time, gangs adapted to the advances of law enforcement and adopted sophisticated technology and organizational techniques to become more efficient in their illegal behavior. Consequently, criminal gangs used their efficiencies to increase the destruction they inflicted on commu-

nities and increased their profits by controlling a larger market in illegitimate businesses, especially in the distribution of illegal drugs.

The Growth of Youth Gangs

As stated in a 2001 report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, “youth gang problems in the United States grew dramatically between the 1970s and the 1990s, with the prevalence of gangs reaching unprecedented levels.” Between 1970 and 1995 the number of cities reporting gang problems had increased seven fold.³ Moreover, the number of counties reporting gang problems in 1995 was 10 times the number of counties reporting gang problems in 1970.⁴ Nationwide, the last quarter of the twentieth century saw a significant and growing domestic crime problem fed by gang activity. Florida, in particular, saw a disproportionate increase in the number of youth gang members.

The number of Florida counties reporting gang problems rose 23 percent between 1970 and 1995.⁵ This upsurge vaulted Florida to a ranking of 4th in the nation among cities reporting youth gang problems.⁶ Within a quarter of a century, youth gangs had become a significant part of the gang threat to the public safety within Florida.

Criminal Gangs in Florida

Most gang activity in Florida appears to be centered in the Central, West and South Florida regions. Over the past three years Florida has seen a significant increase in crimes committed by gang members in smaller sized cities like Panama City, Marianna, Greensboro, Quincy, and Tallahassee. An assessment prepared by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) in November 1991 indicated that there were more than 10,000 documented gang members and associates and over 159 identified gangs in Florida.⁷

Since the 1991 assessment, the number of gangs and gang members in Florida is continuing to grow. In October 2007, FDLE completed a statewide survey of law enforcement agencies, corrections and juvenile justice facilities and prosecutors in an effort to develop a thorough understanding of the scope of the criminal gang problem in Florida. Law enforcement reported increases in gang-related activity over the past 6 to 12 months, and approximately 1,500 criminal gangs with over 65,000 members were identified by survey respondents.⁸ The number of crimes committed by gang members continues to expand, as well. The number of felony convictions for gang members rose from 2,759 in FY 04-05 to 4,447 in FY 06-07. This represents an increase of 61 percent in crimes committed by gang members in Florida over the past three years.⁹ This increasing gang presence is not just a Florida phenomenon, but a nationwide problem. According to the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Association there are at least 21,500 gangs and more than 731,000 active gang members in the United States (excluding prison gangs, and motorcycle gangs.)¹⁰

Top 10 Factors Identified as Contributing to Violent Crime

<i>Factors Contributing to Violent Crime</i>	<i>Percent of Agencies Identifying this as a Problem</i>
Gangs	77%
Juvenile/Youth Crime	74
Impulsive Violence/"Disrespect" Issues	66
Economy/Poverty/Unemployment	63
Release of Offenders from Correctional Institutions Back into the Community	63
Cocaine	61
Poor Parenting	58
Increased Availability of Guns	56
Methamphetamines	38
Insufficient Prison/Jail Space	38

Source: Police Executive Research Forum 2007 National Survey, *Violent Crime in America: The Tale of Two Cities*

for Florida in the years to come. Our state must acknowledge the threat and take concerted action to address this danger to ensure the safety of its citizens. The ability of criminal gangs to recruit and grow is not isolated to the poor or urban sections of Florida. Nor are the adverse effects of gang-related crime unique to a single demographic or race. The damage done by gang activity has spread throughout our communities and across all demographic and social economic lines. The tragedy of an innocent life lost to gang violence is mourned well beyond the individual afflicted family.

Despite increasing evidence of gang crime and violence throughout Florida, some communities continue to deny the

obvious gang presence in their neighborhoods, a phenomenon reflected nationwide. Citizen pride regarding their towns and communities, as well as concerns for commercial and financial interests leads to a reluctance to admit to gang problems. Denying the problem leaves it to fester, thus allowing the gangs to thrive amidst community indifference. In order to combat the crime and devastation brought on by criminal gangs, communities must first recognize when gangs have gained a foothold in their neighborhoods. The success of gang reduction strategies will only be recognized when law enforcement, school officials, community leaders, business owners and local citizens collectively conduct a thorough and accurate analysis of the situation in their communities and when a gang presence is discovered,

Addressing the Problem

Criminal gangs pose a significant and growing threat to the safety and security of the citizens of Florida. If not stopped or reversed, this growing activity will translate into a much larger threat

acknowledge the true nature of a gang presence in their community.

Risk Factors

The Personal Cost of Joining a Gang

Joining a gang is quite costly to the individual. In a study of the economics of drug selling within a well organized gang, active gang members over a four-year period had roughly a 25% chance of dying.¹¹ If the gang member managed to cheat death, he or she would still likely experience two nonfatal injuries and be arrested almost six times.¹² In return for their risky activities, the gang member earns far less than what the “job duties” entail.

Many who join a gang fail to achieve a high school diploma, substantially reducing life-long earnings potential.¹³ As a result, the low-level

gang member earns only a third of those with a high school diploma.¹⁴ Even worse, low-level gang members make half the amount of those earning a legitimate wage without a high school education. Unfortunately, many of those who join gangs do not weigh the small gains attained through gang involvement with the large, detrimental and dangerous consequences that gang membership brings.

The Cost of Criminal Gangs

The cost to Florida for gang-related crime is staggering. The operating costs to manage the facilities incarcerating the over 4,400 identified gang members in prison exceed \$130 million. Identified gang members on state probation cost the criminal justice system another \$2 million per year. All together, convicted gang members cost Florida’s taxpayers more than \$132 million a year.¹⁵

Programs/Policies Implemented in Response to Violent Crime

<i>Programs/Policies Implemented in Response to Increase in Violent Crime</i>	<i>Percent of Agencies Implementing Program/Policy</i>
Hot Spots Enforcement	63%
Community-Oriented Initiative	44
Problem-Solving Policing	37
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Source: Police Executive Research Forum 2007 National Survey, *Violent Crime in America: The Tale of Two Cities*

A Parent's Quick Reference Card

Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement

This quick reference guide provides common warning signs of gang involvement, but may not be all-encompassing. Parents should look for multiple signs to indicate possible gang involvement because some of these indicators alone, such as clothes or musical preferences, are also common among youth not involved in gangs. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with local gang symbols, seek help early, and consider contacting school personnel, local law enforcement, faith leaders, and community organizations for additional assistance.

Warning Signs That Your Child May Be Involved with a Gang

- Admits to "hanging out" with kids in gangs
- Shows an unusual interest in one or two particular colors of clothing or a particular logo
- Has an unusual interest in gangster-influenced music, videos, movies, or websites.
- Uses unusual hand signals to communicate with friends
- Has specific drawings or gang symbols on school books, clothes, walls, or tattoos
- Comes home with unexplained physical injuries (fighting-related bruises, injuries to hand/knuckles)
- Has unexplained cash or goods, such as clothing or jewelry
- Carries a weapon
- Has been in trouble with the police
- Exhibits negative changes in behavior such as:
 - * Withdrawing from family
 - * Declining school attendance, performance, behavior
 - * Staying out late without reason
 - * Displaying an unusual desire for secrecy
 - * Exhibiting signs of drug use
 - * Breaking rules consistently
 - * Speaking in gang-style slang

While the cost of incarceration is significant, the costs gangs have on the juvenile justice system, county jail systems, and courts create an even bigger financial burden on Florida's taxpayers. Moreover, the negative impact of gang-related activity affects Florida's economy. The revenue generated to run government in Florida is fueled largely by the many tourists who visit. Increas-

ing gang activity in our state will most likely discourage tourists from coming to Florida and the economic results could be devastating. The human cost, above all, is the most expensive bill Florida citizens bear. Victimization through personal injury, property crimes, and the ancillary effects of gangs perpetuating the illicit drug market impacts the safety and quality of life for our communities. Gangs cast a shadow of crime over the Sunshine State and represent a major threat to Florida's way of life. There is no doubt that this danger is a growing reality and one that Florida must strive to eliminate.

Individual Risk and Protective Factors

Individual risk factors are personality traits and behaviors that may increase the likelihood that a youth will join a gang. Several studies have noted a few consistent individual risk factors specific to joining a gang. They include: general delinquency, antisocial beliefs, alcohol and drug use, and a propensity toward violence.¹⁶ Lowering the individual risk factors that youth deal with can be daunting, but can be accomplished by decreasing the number of risks youth are exposed to in their neighborhood.

A young person's proclivity to use aggression when confronted with problems in their personal life, or a fatalistic view of the world, are examples of individual factors that need to be addressed to limit the chances for those to expand into larger risks. If those individual risk factors are not tended to, youth will become exposed to additional hazards of substance abuse, illegal gun ownership and early sexual activity. All are threats that will lead to a higher probability of criminal gang activity for youth.

The individual risks that youth face may lead to gang involvement. By confronting the individual risks and lowering their influence on youth, the individual may have a greater chance of mitigating any additional risk factors of their family, school and peers. Individual protective factors that have successfully decreased risk factors include a sense of purpose, a belief in a positive future, commitment to education,

ability to act independently (not easily succumb to peer pressure), and a sense of control over one's environment. Ability for empathy, skills in conflict resolution and critical thinking are additional characteristics that build resiliency to risk behaviors in youth. These critically important protective factors are fostered through other areas of influence in a youth's life such as family, schools and communities.

Family Risk and Protective Factors

The family is the first line of defense in identifying the signs of gang activity. Family dysfunction and lack of parental guidance can play a significant role in increasing the risk of youth joining a criminal gang. The guidance of strong family role models can decrease the chances of a young person engaging in criminal gang activities. The individual risks can be reduced with family guidance from parents, grandparents, other respected and responsible family members or legal guardians who reinforce the belief that joining a gang is not a viable option.

A household that fosters a permissive attitude toward alcohol, drugs and violence is more likely to lead to youth gang activity. An important factor in positively nurturing children has been determined to be the number of times a week the child spends quality time interacting with the family. The correlation is one to one. The more times per week, the better the overall behavior of the youth; the fewer times, the worse the behavior of the youth.¹⁷

Successful preventive programs will seek to engage and inform families of the dangers of criminal gang activity. Information and resource guides will be made available through several different prevention organizations. The literature provided to families will support a variety of practices that can assist their efforts in preventing gang involvement. Without a positive family role model, the remaining risk factors will only be compounded, making prevention an increasingly arduous task.

What Parents Can Do to Prevent Gang Involvement

- Spend quality time with your child
- Get involved in your child's school activities
- Be a positive role model and set the right example
- Know your child's friends and their families
- Encourage good study habits
- Teach your child how to cope with peer pressure
- Help your child develop good conflict/resolution skills (See www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/conflict.asp)
- Encourage your child to participate in positive afterschool activities with adult supervision (recreation centers, organized sports, youth groups)
- Take action in your neighborhood (create a neighborhood alliance, report and remove graffiti)
- Talk with your child about the dangers and consequences of gang involvement. Let your child know that you don't want to see him or her hurt or arrested. Explain to your child that he or she should NOT:
 - * Associate with gang members
 - * Attend parties or social events sponsored by gangs
 - * Use hand signs, symbols, or language that is meaningful to gangs
 - * Wear clothing, including specific colors, which may have meaning to gangs in your area

To obtain details on COPS programs, call the COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770



OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
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www.cops.usdoj.gov www.fbi.gov www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org

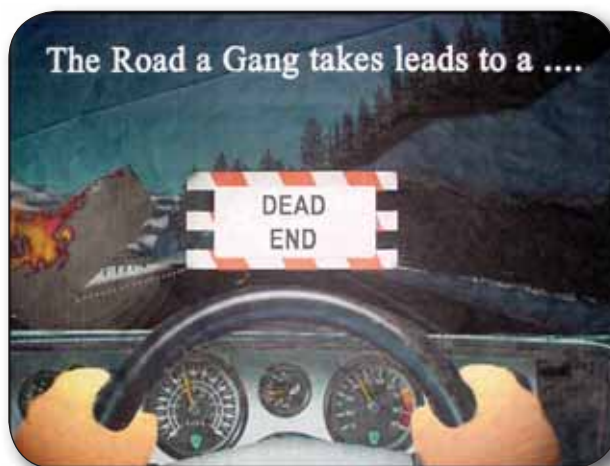
School Risk and Protective Factors

A student's performance and behavior in school, as well as the school's effectiveness in engaging, addressing and providing for the needs of their students, are important factors in determining school risk. A student who has a low-level of academic success or is classified as having a learning disability

is at a higher risk for gang affiliation than other students.¹⁸ Negative attitudes toward school, frequent truancy, suspension, numerous school transitions, and school dropout are recognized as risks for gang involvement. In addition, a student who feels disconnected from school or threatened within school is more vulnerable to gang recruitment.

Students who perform at low levels of achievement may be at a greater risk of being pulled in the direction of criminal gangs because they desire the strong feelings of achievement that the gang provides almost instantly. Although the early infatuation eventually fades, the young gang member is often entirely immersed in the criminal gang lifestyle by the time he/she realizes it, and is often unable to separate themselves from the disastrous course. It is essential for parents and school officials to work together in identifying youth that run a higher risk of gang affiliation, and to work in concert to prevent at-risk youth from being initiated into a gang at an early age.

Commitment to school is a major protective factor in buffering youth at risk of engaging in violent behaviors, such as those associated with gang activities.^{19,20} For youth at risk of gang involvement, developing a feeling of connectedness and commitment to school can reduce the likelihood that he or she will drop out of school and/or become involved in problem behaviors. Schools that provide a safe learning environment, establish discipline measures with positive supports, and create opportunities for students to participate in meaningful ways are characteristics of positive school climate. Schools are a fundamental part of any community's anti-gang strategy because they have the unique advantage of fostering key protective factors for youth, reaching out to parents and families, creating partnerships with law enforce-



ment, and strengthening linkages with community partners.

Peer Risk and Protective Factors

One of the strongest correlations of a youth's risk for delinquency, substance abuse, and other forms of problem behavior is their tendency to spend time

with peers who engage in deviant behaviors.²¹ Youth are more likely to join criminal gangs if they have either a high commitment to delinquent peers or a low commitment to positive peers.²² If youth surround themselves with delinquent peers who use drugs or alcohol, distribute drugs, or have a high proportion of gang affiliation the likelihood of joining a gang goes up markedly.²³

Families and school officials can play a key role in identifying when youth tend to break from their normal routine to spend more time with unfamiliar groups of friends who may be negatively influencing the child. Actions to prevent children from joining criminal gangs should not begin when they reach high school, but must be initiated at an early age when the influence of family and teachers are at their most effective. Influencing when and with whom a child is allowed to spend time will decrease the opportunities of interacting with criminal gang members and positively influence their development.

Community Risk and Protective Factors

Cities, towns and rural communities are at risk of increased threats of criminal gangs when they tolerate cultural norms that support gang behavior and fail to invest the social capital to oppose gang-related crime.²⁴ Other risk factors at the community level associated with gang-related crime are the prevalence of drugs and weapons in a community, and the level of community disorganization.²⁵ This is indicated by high crime rates, gang activity, poor

housing, lack of quality schools and recreational facilities, inadequate availability of social services, and a weakened infrastructure. Such an environment can severely limit youths' opportunities for socially acceptable avenues of success.

Communities that strive for economic sustainability, safe and health-promoting environments, availability of neighborhood resources, and a supportive law enforcement presence set the foundation for an environment that is inhospitable to gangs. Actively promoting positive social norms, social cohesion within and across neighborhoods, and creating opportunities for pro-social community involvement are community protective factors that foster resiliency in youth who are at risk of gang involvement. Communities that work with law enforcement and prevention experts have experienced successes in driving the presence of gangs out of their neighborhoods and have seen the crime rate of their neighborhoods decline.²⁶

End Notes

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- ⁷ Florida Department of Law Enforcement, *Florida Criminal Street Gangs 1995*
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- ¹¹ Steven D. Levitt and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, "An Economic Analysis of Drug-Selling Gang's Finances" *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 2000
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The Strategy

Executive Group and 2007 Gang Reduction Summit

In the summer of 2007 the heads of all state agencies involved with youth and law enforcement met in the Office of the Attorney General to develop a statewide strategy to address the growing problems of gangs and gang violence in Florida. They were joined in this effort by the heads of key Florida law enforcement associations. To build upon a working draft prepared by this executive group in December 2007 the Office of the Attorney General held a Gang Reduction Strategy Summit in Tallahassee. The two-day summit brought leaders from various state agencies, local law enforcement, community leaders, and prevention/intervention organizations and experts together. The framework of this strategy was discussed and approved at the summit.

Mission

The mission of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy is to increase the safety of the citizens of Florida by empowering Florida's youth to reject criminal gangs as a viable option and by substantially reducing gang-related crime and violence in Florida. State agencies cannot singlehandedly combat the problem of gangs. There must be a series of cascading approaches, each adding to the impact of the others, between many state agencies, local governments, and community advocacy groups working in concert to oppose criminal gangs.

Goals

The goals to accomplish this mission are:

1. Stop the growth of criminal gangs in Florida;
2. Reduce the number of gangs and gang members;
3. Render gangs ineffectual.

Criminal gangs have been growing in Florida for the better part of the past 25 years. The first priority of the strategy is to stop this growth of gangs and gang members. That must be immediately followed by the reduction in the number of gangs and gang members. While it may never be possible to completely eliminate all criminal gangs and gang members in Florida, the strategy contemplates rendering what gangs remain ineffectual. Accomplishing these goals will greatly reduce crime and violence in our communities, save the lives of many at-risk youth, give many more youth in our state the opportunity for productive lives, save state and local government a lot of expense and costs associated with gangs and their criminal behavior, and make Florida a safer place to live and work.

Three Pillars

The strategy is based on three pillars:

- Prevention/Intervention
- Law Enforcement
- Rehabilitation/Re-entry

In recent decades law enforcement has been the principal entity attempting to control or resolve the problem of criminal gangs. Law enforcement will be much more efficient in its mission of public safety when it is partnered with prevention and re-entry efforts within the communities and throughout the state. The gang problem is highly complex. A well informed and coordinated effort to fight criminal gangs is necessary. This strategy will work to identify and target the problem with gangs and the youth they affect and enable communities to develop appropriate coalitions and action plans to successfully address the problem of criminal gangs.

Focus of the Effort to Defeat Gangs

Criminal gangs are the enemy of an ordered society. Defeating them necessitates identifying the key to their survival, appeal, and effectiveness. It is the premise of this strategy that the strength of criminal gangs in Florida is their ability to attract a continual stream of young recruits to their ranks. Denied that strength, gangs will dry up, lose their capacity to generate replacements and finally cease their criminal activity.

The strategy, therefore, focuses its efforts toward making gang membership and gang activity less desirable for the youth of this state and turning at-risk youth away from gangs and toward things that will make them productive members of society. This strength of the gang system derives from its ability to cultivate zealous, aggressive members who seek to establish their reputation within the gang. Without that ability, the destructive capacity of the gang is gradually eroded and eventually dissipates completely. The gang itself becomes discredited and is seen in its pernicious reality – a collection of criminals devoid of social conscience, lacking any semblance of dignity and driven only by the petty, selfish interests of their leaders.

Consequently, the prevention/intervention portion of the strategy must not only work to engage at-risk youths and gang members in alternative, constructive and educational activities and social settings, it must also aim at taking away the appeal of the gang. Denied the constant flow of new recruits, the gang will disintegrate. Eventually, the gang will cease to hold any attraction at all and become ineffectual.

At the same time the prevention/intervention efforts are underway, there must be a coordinated law enforcement effort targeting the leaders of certain gangs for prosecution, disrupting gang meetings and activities and cutting off the supply of guns, other weapons and sources of income. Since many of Florida's gang leaders come out of state prison, it is also essential that a special effort be made to intervene with gang members in prison with the objective of educating, training and making as many of them

as possible constructive and contributing citizens of society upon re-entry. By doing so, some of the experienced gang leadership can be eliminated. In most cases this will contribute significantly to the decline and ultimate demise of the gang from which they came.

The end state of this strategy is a Florida where criminal gang activity is minimal to non-existent and where gangs are no longer perceived as a desired option for our youth, but rather as the undesirable criminal organizations they represent. This strategy aims to minimize gang membership and reduce crime committed by gangs to an insignificant percent of total crime in all 67 of Florida's counties.

Prevention/Intervention Objectives:

- Objective 1: Expose Florida's gangs and their activities for their violent and destructive reality.
- Objective 2: Educate youth, parents and other mentoring adults to help Florida's youth reject gang involvement.
- Objective 3: Mobilize communities to repel gang appeal to Florida's youth.
- Objective 4: Provide effective prevention/intervention programs for those youth who are the most likely targets of gang recruitment and identified young gang members
- Objective 5: Encourage and assist with the creation of positive extracurricular activities and workforce development programs for Florida's at-risk youth.
- Objective 6: Support existing and new community groups/coalitions that take a stand against criminal gangs.

Prevention is essential to the success of the strategy. The most effective and least costly way to stop the growth and reduce the number of criminal gangs and gang members in Florida is to convince youth never to join a gang in the first place.

The first three prevention/intervention objectives are aimed at taking away the appeal of gangs to

at-risk youth. They contemplate a program being developed statewide or in a community or region to communicate to these at-risk youth the message that gangs are undesirable to belong to. In order to develop and deliver the proper message, prevention/intervention organizations and community leaders must study and thoroughly understand the motivational forces involved in gang membership and what makes gang membership appealing to youth. Then using this information the image of gang membership must be portrayed to these youth as something they would not want to be a part of.

The remaining three prevention/intervention objectives concern providing constructive, educational and entertaining alternatives to gangs for at-risk youth. Since most youth recruited into gangs are missing some essential elements of family and community, these objectives include making up for what is missing as much as possible, and instilling hope and opportunity in those youth and a sense that they can dream big dreams and make them come true. While there are many prevention/intervention programs for at-risk youth, the objectives focus attention specifically on those at-risk youth in the community most likely to be recruited by gangs.

Law Enforcement Objectives:

- Objective 1: Compile a statewide priority list and target every major criminal gang in Florida for dismantling by arresting and prosecuting gang leaders and key gang members.
- Objective 2: Identify and target for arrest and prosecution all gang kingpins in Florida and seek life imprisonment sentences.
- Objective 3: Prioritize the prosecution of gun crimes related to gangs and gang members and target for prosecution those who provide guns to juvenile gang members ineligible to own or possess a gun.
- Objective 4: In areas of intense gang activity, build community policing, remove

firearms from low to mid-level gang members and use injunctive powers to prohibit gang members from gathering.

- Objective 5: Improve intelligence gathering and information sharing on gangs and gang members and their activities among and between federal, state and local law enforcement, prosecuting authorities, schools and Juvenile Justice, Corrections, and Children and Families officials.
- Objective 6: Strengthen gang law enforcement and prosecution with more uniform, specialized training and designate one Assistant State Attorney in each judicial circuit whose sole, full-time responsibility is to prosecute and manage the prosecution of gangs, gang members and gang-related crimes.
- Objective 7: Coordinate federal, state and local law enforcement/prosecution efforts toward the common objective of combating gang activity in Florida, including setting priorities and targeting certain gangs, gang activities and gang-related prosecutions all over Florida.

With over 1,500 criminal gangs and thousands of gang members in Florida who engage in criminal activities across many jurisdictional boundaries, law enforcement efforts to suppress criminal gangs more effectively will require enhanced coordination, targeting, prioritization and aggressive approaches. The law enforcement objectives in this strategy are designed to accomplish this, and in conjunction with prevention/intervention community efforts to stop the growth of gangs, reduce their number and the number of gang members and ultimately render them ineffectual.

The objectives contemplate a statewide effort to prioritize dismantling gangs. This is not a central command and control effort. It must be a cooperative effort among all law enforcement agencies, federal, state and local. To be successful, the strategy requires identifying, arresting and prosecuting key gang leaders in all targeted gangs

throughout Florida and seeking a life sentence for them. This will require improved intelligence gathering and information sharing and better trained and more specialized prosecutors including one designated assistant state attorney in each judicial circuit whose sole, full time responsibility is to prosecute gang members.

With so much of the violent crime in Florida attributable to gang activities and its violence most often associated with guns, one of the objectives should be to do a better job of keeping guns out of the hands of gang members. In order to accomplish this, prosecutors will have to focus more on prosecuting gun crimes relating to gang members including prosecuting those who provide guns to juvenile gang members ineligible to own or possess a gun.

In as much as gangs generally operate from a defined and comparatively small geographic area within a community, community policing targeted to areas of intense gang activity can make a difference and combined with the ability to enjoin gang members from meeting can disrupt and render gangs less effectual.

Rehabilitation and Re-entry Objectives:

- Objective 1: Expand opportunities for criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems to participate in prison industry programs, educational programs, faith and character-based programs, drug treatment/rehabilitation programs and all other programs designed to rehabilitate offenders or assist offenders in preparing for re-entry into society upon completion of their sentences.
- Objective 2: Develop and implement specialized, individualized counseling and mentoring focused on motivating criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems to gain educational, vocational or job training, social skills,

and lifestyle interests and habits that will turn offenders away from gang membership/participation and toward becoming productive members of society when released.

- Objective 3: Provide job placement for criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems upon release and provide a counselor/mentor for each such released offender to give guidance, assist with acquiring and keeping a job, educational advancement, and building positive relationships outside of gangs for a period of five years after release.
- Objective 4: Require all identified criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems, upon release, to register with an identified state office and keep their address, contact information and job status current for ten years after release and require such released offenders to report in person for counseling to a counselor/mentor at least quarterly for the first five years after release.
- Objective 5: Train and qualify the necessary number of counselors/mentors/teachers to accomplish the individualized goals of gang member rehabilitation and re-entry from state or county correctional systems.

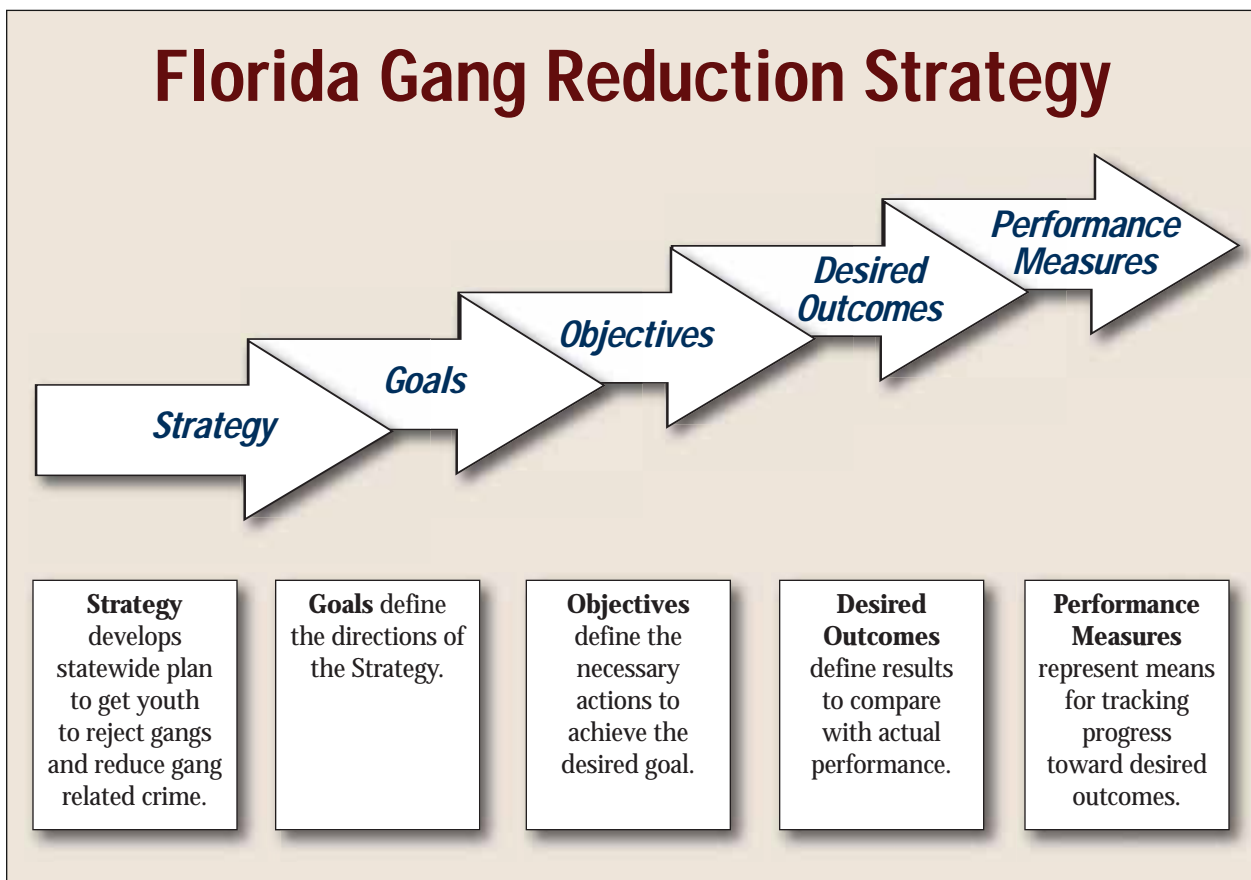
Several thousand gang members are incarcerated in Florida's state prisons. Few, if any, of these gang members receive any targeted rehabilitation efforts while they are in prison. Most are released from prison within a few years of their incarceration. It appears that many of these released gang members go back to their communities and become the key leaders in their criminal gang.

The rehabilitation and re-entry objectives of the strategy are designed to divert some of these incarcerated gang members from returning to their gangs when released. The more successful intervention programs are in prison the better

the chances of success for community efforts to dismantle and render ineffectual the gangs from which these prison inmates come.

Rehabilitation and re-entry objectives of the strategy can be accomplished by using specially trained counselors and mentors to try to motivate gang members in prison to participate in rehabilitation, educational, and drug treatment programs

designed to redirect their lives away from gang membership. Upon release from prison the objectives call for personalized assistance and monitoring for a number of years in order to place the former gang member in a job and steering him or her to a new life away from the gang.



Concept of Operation

Coordinating Council

Working under the auspices of the Office of the Attorney General the executive group that initiated planning for the gang strategy will act as a coordinating council. The Attorney General and the council will coordinate bringing together prevention/intervention organizations, community leaders the business community and local, state and federal law enforcement that will form seven regional task forces in the state. While action and operational decisions will be made by organizational leaders, community leaders, and local elected officials, the Attorney General and coordinating council will provide guidance and assistance in achieving the objectives of the strategy. The council will work with the Department of Corrections and others in pursuit of the rehabilitation and re-entry objectives. The council will also coordinate the collection of data, develop and carry out a process for measuring the success of the strategy and periodically adjust it as may be necessary.

Regional Task Forces

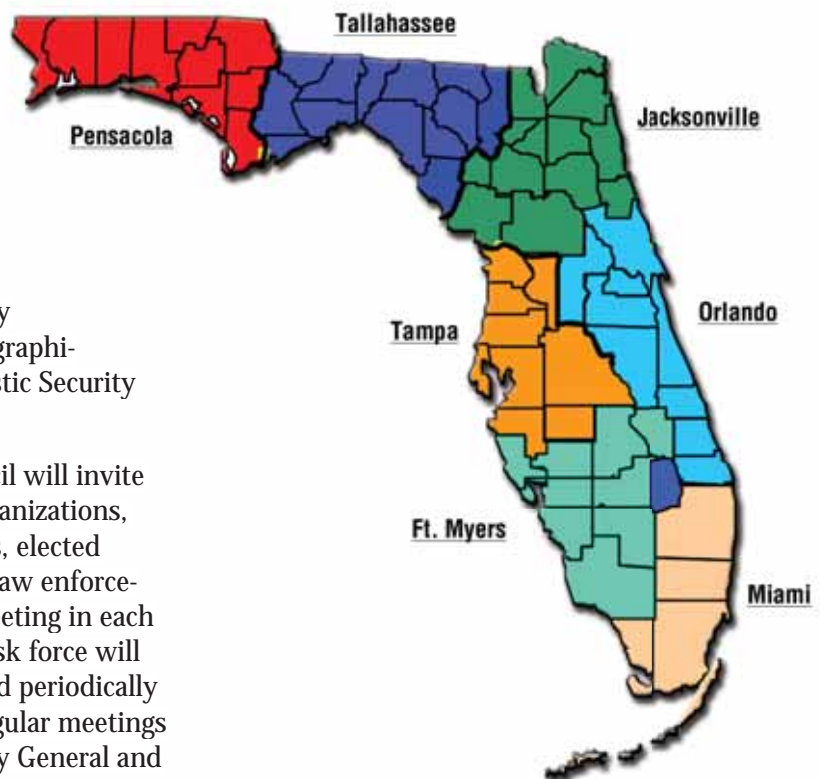
The state will be divided into seven regions and a gang strategy task force developed within each region. The Gang Reduction Strategy regions will each have the same geographical composition as the state's Domestic Security Task Force Regions.

The Attorney General and the council will invite selected prevention/intervention organizations, community leaders, business leaders, elected officials and local, state and federal law enforcement for an initial organizational meeting in each region. It is anticipated that each task force will select a chairman who will be rotated periodically and that the task forces will hold regular meetings at least once a quarter. The Attorney General and

the council will provide the task forces with as much guidance and data as possible. The regional task forces will not be statutory or official bodies of the state. Participation is completely voluntary. There will be no funding or material support from the state available to the task forces at the inception of this strategy.

It is anticipated that by participation in the regional task force each unit of local government within the region and each law enforcement agency will benefit significantly. While gangs may have a comparatively small territory that they claim, their criminal activity knows no geographical boundary. The advantages of and benefits from a coordinated effort under the statewide strategy should be clear to all.

Regional Gang Reduction Task Forces



It is essential that each task force develop its own plan of action, set time tables and carry it out. Also, it is hoped that each task force will provide a conduit of information back to the Attorney General and the coordinating council and assist in the collection of data necessary to measure progress in the strategy. The key component of the concept of operation is the networking and coordination of local community components. For the citizens of Florida to witness substantial declines in youth gang membership, school dropout rates and gang-related crime, there must be a melding of the two powerful forces of law enforcement and prevention/intervention. Law enforcement agencies will become more productive in their operations when prevention gets youth to reject joining criminal gangs and prevention organizations see fewer youth losing their potential to gangs and can work with them to make positive choices in their lives.

Developing a Prevention/ Intervention Plan

To be effective, each regional task force must develop a plan of action to accomplish the Gang Reduction Strategy in their region. All participants need to be open-minded, committed to the goals and objectives of the strategy and willing to think out of the box in developing and carrying out a plan.

If existing prevention/intervention organizations participate and are willing to adapt their organizational goals and resources to meet the objectives of this strategy and the plan developed by the regional task force, they should be utilized to carry out the plan and achieve the objectives of the strategy. Where necessary, the task force should not hesitate to bring in a prevention/intervention program from outside the region or create such new programs as may be necessary. Local community involvement and leadership in a prevention/intervention program is essential for success.

The plan must include proposals to get youth at-risk of being recruited into gangs to reject gang recruitment. The regional task force needs to study and understand the psychology involved and then develop a plan of action to discredit

gangs in the eyes of these youth tailored to the specific communities and gangs in their region. Working with local television, radio, cable, and other media, there should be a media campaign prepared and carried out to further this objective. Simultaneously, working with parents, teachers, school officials and church leaders, an approach needs to be developed and carried out to discredit gangs in the schools and in churches and other community outlets that touch and interact with children most at-risk of being recruited by gangs. Mediums most frequented by youth, such as social networks like MySpace, Facebook, etc. should be utilized in getting the message out.

The message to discredit gangs should be inclusive of the sexual exploitation of women so commonly associated with gangs, along with other criminal activities such as drive-by shootings, home invasions, assaults, batteries, etc. It should emphasize the contrast between the financial gains of the leader, as compared to the minimal gain of the lower level members. It should include a thorough exposure of the gang leadership's brainwashing of the new recruits that requires them to give up all their individual rights and freedoms. It should expose the extreme brutal treatment of gang initiation and the violence inflicted upon any gang member who attempts to think independently or who attempts to leave. It should focus on the violent crimes new recruits are required to commit, and how this is used as a threat and control technique to keep them in the gang by threatening to expose their criminal activities should they attempt to get out of the gang.

It should point out that new recruits, as well as their family members, are threatened in order to keep them in the gang, and that it is not uncommon for brutal attacks and deadly force to be used on family members rather than the gang member himself in order to force compliance with the gang leaders and the gang creed. The message should also focus on the early mortality rates of those associated with gang membership and the frequent criminal convictions that many gang members have which will result in denial of voting rights, limiting future employment, and any other nega-

tive to gang membership that might dissuade an at-risk youth from joining a gang.

The second major component of the prevention/intervention plan must be the providing of constructive, educational, and entertaining alternatives to gangs for at-risk youth and also compensating for the absence of social and family elements that most at-risk youth experience. It is anticipated that participating task forces will include many prevention/intervention organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Urban League organizations, church groups, etc., which already have experience working in the local community at this level. What is most likely missing in the function of these organizations is specific targeting of youth most at-risk of being recruited into gangs and programs especially designed for this group.

It is contemplated that under the guidance of the Attorney General and the coordinating council and with the cooperative effort of local law enforcement and other community leaders, these existing organizations will develop new, effective initiatives to address the target group. When a task force concludes that it would be beneficial to bring in a prevention/intervention program that does not exist in the region or initiate a new program, it should do so and make sure that cooperation and coordination with existing organizations in the region occurs. Often a single program only addresses a few of the needs, while a number of programs working together are much more likely to succeed. It is vital to our success that every possible expertise is brought to bear and pride in existing local organizations should not stand in the way of doing whatever it takes to accomplish the strategy objectives.

Task forces should encourage support for existing faith-based programs and the establishment of new faith-based programs targeted at youths at risk of being recruited into gangs and existing gang members. Priority should be given to recruiting every church and religious leader in the region to participate. Not every at-risk youth will wake up and come to church and change their lives; therefore church leaders should be encouraged to

go out into the community and target youth who are especially at risk of being recruited into gangs and where possible, gang members.

The parents, especially those of at-risk youth, should be engaged. The Gang Reduction Summit found that parents desire additional education about the early signs of gang involvement and want to know the best way to intervene with their child when the early signs of gang involvement appear. They want to know how prevention or intervention can be supported by their local schools and community leaders. An effective plan will educate these parents and involve them in every way possible.

Communities where gangs flourish often find gang members and youth at risk of being gang members involved in a culture that accepts and sometimes glorifies school truancy, school drop-out, drug use, and drug abuse. The prevention/intervention plan must include a program working with schools, parents, and community leaders to address these concerns, specifically with respect to the youth most at risk of joining a gang. Special steps should be taken to discourage truancy and school drop-outs among these youth. There should be targeted mentoring and after school tutoring programs. School resource officers should be actively engaged to assist and provide support. Youth at risk of being recruited into gangs should be given intense anti-drug education and, when needed, should be given priority in drug rehabilitation programs.

Plans should give special attention to workforce development programs for these at-risk youth. Most who wind up engaging in criminal activity have never worked and have no job skills and no work ethic. Getting at-risk youth engaged in workforce development suitable for their age group is very important and could make a real difference in whether they end up joining a gang or perhaps can be enticed to leave a gang if they have joined. The task force should consider developing a plan to reach out to local businesses and recruit them to participate in a workforce program and mentoring for these at-risk youth. After school based



programs that teach leadership skills, interviewing skills for potential employment, resume preparing skills, personal presentation skills, etc., should be a high priority of the task force.

Last but not least, the plan should include a relationship with judicial intervention programs where at-risk youth have encountered the law. It is important to have working relationships with the courts and with the juvenile justice system. Teen courts and other alternative programs can be a big help. Where teen court programs or the like do not exist, the task force should examine existing programs in other communities and consider developing such programs within the region or within communities lacking these programs.

Law Enforcement Plan Developments

Each regional task force should have a law enforcement plan as well as a prevention/intervention plan. This may be one comprehensive document inasmuch as the objective is to coordinate

both prevention/intervention and law enforcement. Whether there are two separate plans or a single one, it is very important that all participants in the regional task forces are involved in the preparation and planning for both the prevention/intervention and the law enforcement portions.

The law enforcement plan should set a priority targeting every major criminal gang in the region for dismantling. The priority list should focus on the most violent and dangerous gangs first, but law enforcement intelligence and analysis will be the key in setting the priorities on the list. Within the targeted gangs the first order of business should be to make cases against the leaders, and get prosecutions and convictions under the new gang kingpin statute where possible. The idea is to take down as many gangs as possible within the region in a systematic fashion and try especially hard to put away the gang kingpins/leaders for life or for an extremely high number of years. The prevention/intervention plan should call for targeting first and foremost youth in the geographical area most likely subject to gang recruit-

ment for the gangs that are being dismantled by law enforcement. At the same time intervention efforts should be made to try and peel off young gang members from these gangs that are not being prosecuted. By combining tough law enforcement with focused prevention/intervention efforts, it is more likely a particular gang can be permanently dissolved or rendered ineffectual.

Because violence associated with gangs is on the upswing in Florida, law enforcement plans should prioritize the prosecution of gun crimes related to gangs and gang members. The task force should consider organizing “gun buy back days” and/or “turn in your gun days.” Special efforts should be made to prevent juveniles from getting access to guns through purchases at gun shows either illegally by an underage youth or through the assistance of an adult who makes the purchase for the youth.

Where possible, the plan should call for community policing and the use of injunctions to prohibit gang members from gathering in areas of intense gang activity. More communities across the nation are turning to civil injunctions to prohibit gathering and association of gang members in certain public areas where criminal activities have previously taken place or are known to be taking place. The plan should call for taking advantage of a new state law with respect to the use of such an injunction and each community should consider developing local ordinances to assist law enforcement in this regard.

It is important that the task force include representation from a wide spectrum of law enforcement in the region. State and federal enforcement officials should be included. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), Postal Inspectors, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and U.S. Customs should all be asked to participate. So should Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Naturally, all relevant state agencies should be involved including the Florida

Department of Law Enforcement, the Florida Department of Corrections, representatives from the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Florida Highway Patrol, the state Department of Transportation and Motor Carrier Compliance, state Fire Marshals, state Beverage officers and state Agricultural officers, etc.

Including as many representatives from different law enforcement persuasions as possible is very important in putting together a team that can have a wide base of information to share. Improved intelligence gathering and information sharing on gangs and gang members is absolutely essential to the success of the task force and the strategy. Law enforcement plans should encompass guidance for intelligence gathering and information sharing among all law enforcement who partner in the task force and the many specialized law enforcement associations, such as the Florida Gang Investigators Association, Florida Narcotics Association, Florida Intelligence Unit, etc.

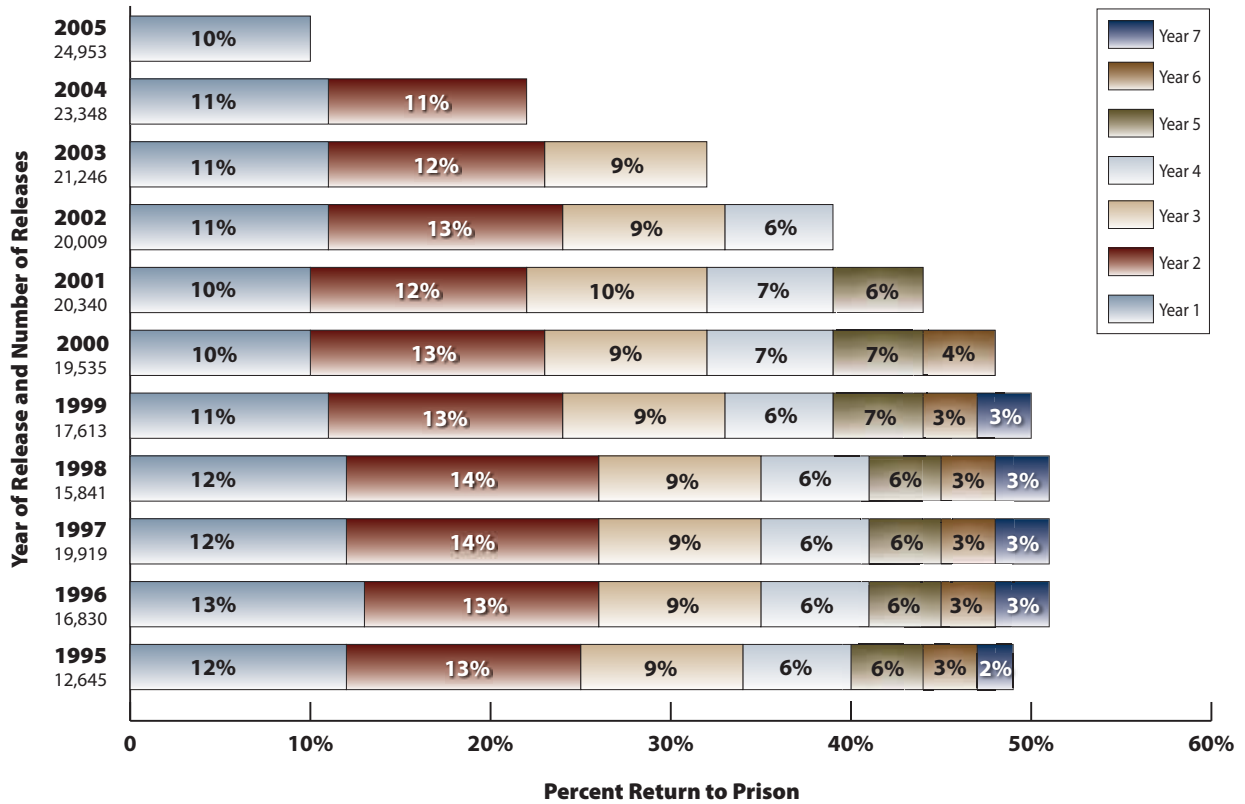
Additionally, the task force should include a representative of all prosecuting agencies which have a presence within the region. They should be asked to help set the priorities and give advice on ways to control the flow of guns and use injunctive powers to prohibit gangs from gathering. The task force should encourage each state attorney in the region to designate at least one assistant state attorney in his/her judicial circuit whose sole responsibility is to prosecute and manage the prosecution of gangs, gang members and gang-related crime. Gang prosecutions can be complex and very time consuming. While the resources of each state attorney are very limited, each will understand the very grave importance that needs to be placed on dismantling gangs in achieving the goals of this Gang Reduction Strategy.

In conjunction with developing a law enforcement plan, each task force should develop and catalog a list of every known criminal gang and gang member in the region. A task force team should be organized to make this happen and to make certain that the list is clear of duplicates and updated with

Florida Recidivism Rates

Overall three-year recidivism rate since 1995 is 32.8%.

Data indicates that Year Two after release is the time period when most recidivists return to prison.



regularity. Members of the task force should help guide what information should be gathered for this list. At least once a year, the coordinating council should be provided a copy of the list that is maintained by the regional task forces.

Rehabilitation and Re-entry Plan Development

With guidance and assistance from the Attorney General and the coordinating council, the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement agencies will make the rehabilitation and re-entry of criminal gang members a major component of the re-entry program. The Department of Corrections' re-entry initiative will also be designed to fulfill the objectives of the Gang Reduction

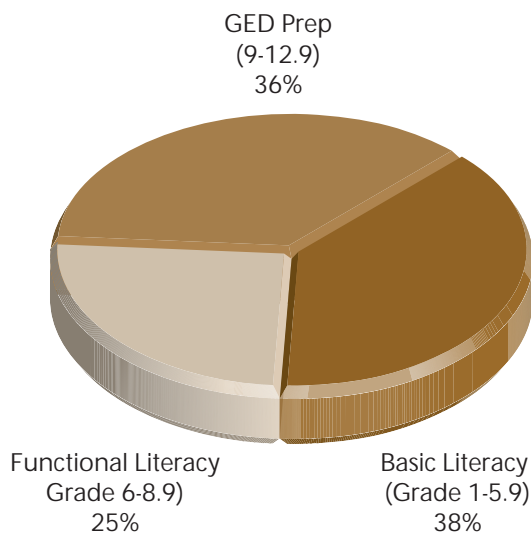
Strategy.

The Department of Corrections and Re-entry

Last year approximately 35,000 inmates were released from Florida's prisons. According to the Florida Department of Corrections' 2006-2007 Annual Report, Florida's prison population was 92,844 inmates (as of June 30, 2007). During this same time period, inmate admissions were 37,864, an increase of 7.9% over the prior year. Corrections officials report that a third of released inmates return to Florida prisons within a 3-year period. Furthermore, the basic education level of Florida's inmate population is at a 7th grade level. When looking at literacy levels,

37.1% of the inmate’s have a literacy competency of an elementary student.

Literacy Skill Level - Total Population



Ethnicity	Median Literacy Level
Black Males	6.0
Black Females	6.1
White Males	8.6
White Females	9.7
Other Males	6.1
Other Females	7.1

Tested Literacy Skill Level (Most Recent Tests of Adult Basic Education [TABE] as of June 30th, 2007

General Educational Development (GED) Tests are available within the prison system, but many of Florida’s inmates initially do not have the education level necessary to obtain a GED or even prepare for a GED examination. Even a vocational certificate often requires an educational level of 9th grade or higher. With 64.2% of the population below this mark, a vocational certificate is often unattainable for some fifty thousand inmates every year. Not surprisingly, an ex-offender returning to the community is confronted by employers with statements such as “no job,”

“no skills” and “not enough education.”

Many returning ex-offenders also have some form of substance dependency. Approximately 64% of the inmates incarcerated in Florida prisons have been identified as having a substance abuse problem. While detoxification happens as a result of incarceration, many inmates will return to an environment where drugs are once again available. The potential for relapse can greatly hamper any re-entry service, such as educational and vocational programs, if substance abuse treatment is not provided. In fact, relapse dramatically reduces the chance for an ex-offender to maintain stable employment – a key factor in reducing recidivism.

As indicated in Florida’s Drug Control Strategy, drug users are less dependable than other workers and decrease workplace productivity. Drug users compared to drug-free workers are also more likely to take an unexcused absence, get fired more frequently, and also switch jobs more frequently.

While the Department of Corrections has the responsibility to supervise some offenders after their release from prison, the agency also supervises an even greater number of offenders sentenced directly to community supervision in the form of probation. Offenders on community supervision have some transitional programs available to them, however more programs must be provided in order to adequately address the problem of recidivism. With the Department of Corrections in the unique position of supervising offenders in the community and in prison, it affords them the opportunity to have an immense impact on gang members’ chances of leaving the criminal lifestyle behind.

Many offenders while on probation or those being released from prison lack the knowledge of possible resources available to them in the community to help in their re-entry needs. Access to the resources, identifying the resources that are willing to serve convicted felons, and securing reliable transportation to visit these resources can be difficult to accomplish. Consequently, without recognizing and accessing legitimate support in

the community, many of these individuals return to their former ways, a lifestyle of crime and criminal gang involvement.

Given these factors, it is not surprising that ex-offender recidivism is predictable. Without skill development opportunities and support systems a return to criminal behavior is often very probable.

Emphasizing Re-entry

Many of these aforementioned barriers to successful re-entry were well documented in the December 2006 report produced by Governor Bush's Ex-Offender Task Force. Following that report and in response to the staggering statistics associated with those returning to the state correctional system, the Department of Corrections has made reducing recidivism a major focus. In May 2007, the Department of Corrections changed its mission to state, "To protect the public, ensure the safety of Department personnel, and provide for the proper care and supervision of all offenders

under our jurisdiction while assisting, as appropriate, their re-entry into society." Coupled with this change to the mission statement, the Department set a goal for inmates to bring their recidivism rate down from its present rate (33%) to 20% or less by 2012. The Department envisions that, if accomplished, the criminal justice system will see a significant reduction in the demands that repeat offenders exert and provide safer communities for the citizens of Florida and those who visit the state.

Current and future re-entry initiatives in place to accomplish this goal will be represented in the Department's Re-entry Strategic Plan, expected to be completed by the end of 2008. Consequently, given that there are approximately 4,000 inmates in state prisons who have been identified as members

of criminal gangs, and this population represents some of the greatest challenges to re-entry efforts, corrections officials need to incorporate initiatives specifically tailored for criminal gang members within the state correctional system.

The objectives of this strategy contemplate the Department of Corrections developing and implementing specialized counseling and mentoring criteria designed to motivate criminal gang members in prison and under the community supervision, to gain educational, vocational and job training skills. Additionally, lifestyle interests and habits should be established that will turn them away from gang membership and toward becoming productive members of society upon re-entry. There is no doubt this will require training and qualify-

ing a certain number of counselors, mentors and teachers to accomplish the individualized goals of gang member rehabilitation and re-entry. Therefore, it may be necessary for the Department of Corrections to seek grants from the federal government and/or private foundations with an interest in



prisoner re-entry.

As with many prisoners, gang member inmates will likely need drug treatment and rehabilitation services. While there may be legal or regulatory issues which restrict giving priority to criminal gang members in such programs as well as in education and training programs, every effort should be made to provide all gang member inmates who qualify, access to all available programs and to create new programs where necessary.

The rehabilitation and re-entry plan should include detailed provisions for job placement of criminal gang members when they are released and for providing a counselor/mentor for each released offender to give guidance, assist with

acquiring and keeping a job, educational advancement, and building positive relationships outside of gangs for a period of at least five years after release from prison. This, too, may require additional funding from grants either at the federal level or from private foundations. The plan should include proposals to seek such grants.

The strategy calls for all identified criminal gang members in state or county correctional systems, upon release, to register with an identified state office, and keep their address, contact information and job status current for ten years after release and that each released gang member inmate re-

port in person for counseling to a counselor/mentor for a period of at least five years after release from prison. The rehabilitation and re-entry plan should address how this is to be structured and accomplished and include a plan and timetable for any changes in regulations or law that may be necessary.

The Department of Corrections should call upon members of the coordinating council for any assistance they may be able to give in developing or carrying out this plan.

Measuring Success

The mission of the Gang Reduction Strategy is to increase the safety of Florida citizens by empowering Florida's youth to reject criminal gangs as a viable option and by substantially reducing gang-related crime and violence in Florida. The goals to accomplish the mission are stopping the growth of criminal gangs in Florida, reducing the number of gangs and gang members and rendering gangs ineffectual. To accomplish this mission and these goals, there must be a standard set of data collected annually to measure progress and success.

Gang Data

The number of criminal gangs and gang members in Florida is unclear. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) announced in October 2007 the results of their first gang survey since 1995. It appears from this survey there are at least 1,500 gangs and well over 65,000 gang members in Florida. Unfortunately, the 2007 survey is incomplete and may have duplications in it. The survey was directed to Florida's sheriffs, police chiefs, and school resource officers. A very sizeable number of them failed to respond. Inasmuch as there is overlap among the jurisdictions of police, sheriffs, and school resource officers, it is difficult to analyze and sort out areas where duplication in counting may have occurred.

The InSite Intelligence Database is a statewide database maintained by FDLE which is designed for the sharing of gang intelligence among all law enforcement agencies statewide. The system is contributed to on a voluntary basis. Many law enforcement agencies utilize their own database for storage of intelligence information and may or may not contribute to the FDLE statewide gang database. One of the reasons this occurs is the diversity of database products among local and state agencies. These agencies must duplicate their efforts if they are to share their intelligence statewide. Sheriffs and police chiefs have been

unable or unwilling to assign staff for duplicate entries; therefore, the statewide database rarely gets updated with the information that is stored in local databases.

It is the recommendation of this strategy that FDLE research all technological solutions available to find a way to allow local and other state systems to electronically upload their gang intelligence information into the statewide system in order to eliminate the need for duplication and to facilitate a complete statewide database that all law enforcement and criminal justice agencies can readily access and retrieve pertinent information on a timely basis.

The Department of Corrections maintains a Security Threat Group (STG) management initiative that catalogs gangs and gang members in state prisons. From the data available, it appears that there is at least one gang member from each of Florida's 67 counties serving in state prison. While this initiative appears very thorough with respect to those who are inmates and have been identified as potential threats to prison security, it is unclear whether it captures all criminal gang members serving time in state prison or whether some of those who are cataloged as gang members for prison purposes might not be members of a criminal gang in a local community prior to entering prison.

As a consequence of the incomplete and loosely connected data on criminal gangs and gang members currently available, the coordinating council, together with regional task forces, must develop a simplified statewide system for the annual reporting of data on gangs and gang members. For the purpose of this strategy, the only data that needs to be collected annually is the name and geographical location of every identified criminal gang in a region, the number of members in each gang, and the nature and amount of criminal activity attrib-

uted to each gang during the preceding year (number of arrests and convictions of gang members).

Each regional task force should designate a single member to be responsible for collecting the data from the region each year and submitting it to the Office of the Attorney General. It is suggested that the easiest way to accomplish this collection task would be for each sheriff to take responsibility for collecting the data from his or her county using the resources of the office and information solicited from each police department in the county, the county jail, and the school resource officers of all the middle schools and high schools in the county. The designated regional task force member should work with each sheriff and his or her designee to screen the data collected from the various sources within the county for accuracy and to make sure there are no duplications.

The measuring period to be used in the collection of this gang data will be the fiscal year ending June 30 of each year. It will be the responsibility of each regional task force to collect the data from its region, organize it and submit it to the Attorney General no later than September 30 of each year.

It is recognized that for this strategy to meet its long-term objectives, law enforcement and prevention organizations will need more detailed data on gangs and gang membership than is outlined in this strategy. This is the data needed for metrics. It is the basic, fundamental data necessary to measure progress and success. Along the way, the members of the regional task forces and the coordinating council need to work with FDLE to improve and make more effective and efficient its periodic longer survey of gangs and gang membership. One of the first things each regional task force should do is to critique the current FDLE survey and make suggestions for improvement in the questions and data requested and help FDLE come up with a way to assure a more timely and complete response from those surveyed and a way to assure more accuracy and less duplication of data reported.

The regional task forces and the coordinating

council should also work with FDLE on improvements to InSite. Intelligence sharing is crucial to law enforcement and a more complete and workable database for intelligence sharing purposes to fight gangs would be invaluable. But the immediate goal is to gather the simple, basic data necessary for measuring progress and success.

Prevention/Intervention Data

Unfortunately, Florida has no state database identifying existing prevention/intervention programs directed toward at-risk youth, nor any criteria for grading or measuring the success of existing programs. There is no repository of information as to which, if any, existing prevention programs in Florida specifically target children at risk of being recruited into gangs or their effectiveness. The very fact that gang membership appears to have steadily grown in Florida for a number of years suggests existing programs are not working, or at best, have had a limited impact on gang recruitment and growth.

The coordinating council or a designated state agency must gather a comprehensive list/database on all at-risk youth prevention programs operating in Florida. Included in this database should be an indication which, if any, of these programs specifically target children at risk of being recruited into gangs and how these programs operate.

As the regional task forces are formed and organized, they will be asked by the coordinating council to compile a list within their region of all prevention/intervention programs directed toward at-risk youth and designate which, if any, of these programs specifically target children at risk of being recruited into gangs. For those that target youth being recruited into gangs, the task force should determine the model and/or methodology being used by the program to address this targeted group and provide this information to the coordinating council. The list should be comprehensive and include both faith-based and non faith-based organizations and programs. Where identifiable, mentoring programs should

be included. In developing the list, the task forces should consider including local Boys and Girls Clubs; Urban League programs; YMCA programs; Police Athletic Leagues programs; United Way supported organizational programs; and any other after-school or community based programs or initiatives the task forces can identify.

As with the collection of gang data, the regional task forces should also collect and revise the prevention/intervention program data on an annual basis for the previous 12 months of a fiscal year concluding on June 30 and report the data to the Office of the Attorney General by September 30 each year. It is suggested that each task force identify a member to be in charge of the collection of this data and that a member of the task force from each county be designated to work with this person to collect the data and sort through it. All members of the regional task force should be called upon to contribute information and provide assistance in this effort.

The collection of this prevention/intervention program data in each region is not only important for statewide measurement of progress and success, it is also essential for the regional task forces to have this data in order to succeed in their prevention/intervention objectives. The collection of the base data should be the first priority of each task force.

A longer term goal of the coordinating council and the task forces should be the development of a methodology to measure the quality of success for prevention/intervention programs directed specifically at youth likely to be recruited into gangs. There appears to be a lot of literature on various prevention/intervention programs directed at these youth, but no known gauge exists for measuring the success or comparative success of these programs.

Workforce Development/Training Programs

A sub-set of the prevention/intervention programs for youth at risk of being recruited into gangs are those specifically designed to engage these youth

in workforce development and/or training. As with most youth who engage in criminal activity and end up in state prisons, few gang members have developed marketable skills or held a job. Each task force should collect a list of all existing workforce development/training programs in the region. Most likely, these will be associated with area high schools, but there may be some prevention/intervention programs or community organizations with a workforce development component that exists separate and apart from the schools.

While existing organizations that are trying to address youth vulnerable to gang membership may already have a workforce development component, the likelihood is that the task force will have to foster, develop or coordinate this component in their regions. It may be that the task forces will have to develop such programs specifically for the targeted youth. Only with a good database of existing programs and available resources will this be possible.

Drug Rehabilitation/Treatment Program Data

Studies indicate that drugs are intertwined with criminal gangs and gang members. It is believed that criminal gangs in Florida are the primary retail outlet for the sale of most types of illicit drugs. Many young gang members are drug users and may be addicted to one or more narcotics.

The Gang Reduction Strategy contemplates a coordinated effort between the regional task forces and drug prevention/rehabilitation/treatment programs in the local communities. Task forces should collect a list of all such programs in their region and involve them in their effort as appropriate. This data should be readily accessible. Task force leaders should seek the assistance of the Florida Office of Drug Control to access this data and help with the coordination of all drug related issues.

Inmate Re-entry Data

Working with the Department of Corrections, and the coordinating council, each regional task force needs to collect a list of faith-based and non faith-based programs in the region which provide assistance to inmates leaving state prisons. The development of organized efforts in the state by non-profit organizations to provide assistance to offenders in acquiring jobs is gaining support in several parts of the state. The programs of these organizations need to be identified and assessed as to the number of released inmates who are able to be placed in jobs each year and how successful they may be in terms of keeping these individuals employed once they have acquired employment.

This data will be invaluable to both the task forces and the Department of Corrections in future efforts to divert gang members who leave prison from returning to a gang lifestyle. There are a few programs that exist in Florida that are specifically targeted to gang members who are re-entering society, and task forces should consider working with the existing programs. Task forces should work with the Department of Corrections in developing job opportunities for gang members re-entering society and methods of mentoring and following them for a substantial period of time after release from prison.

Community Involvement

While the Department of Corrections will play the leading role in re-entry initiatives, community leaders and local law enforcement must also play an active role and partner in these efforts. Without local law enforcement officials and community leaders supporting community re-entry programs and addressing re-entry issues at a local level, the chances for sustainable success will be limited. Examples of quality partnerships exist all around the state. They include Jacksonville's Re-entry Center (Jacksonville Sheriff's Office), Broward County's Re-entry Coalition, and the Pinellas County Ex-Offender Re-entry Coalition. Coalitions and organizations such

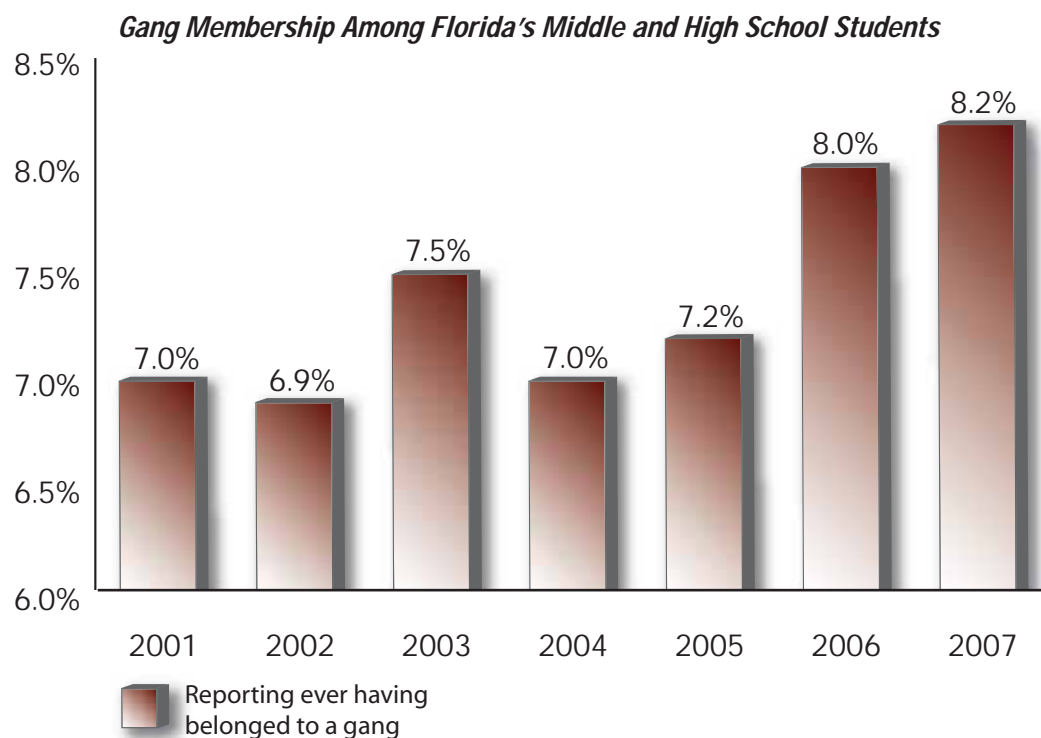
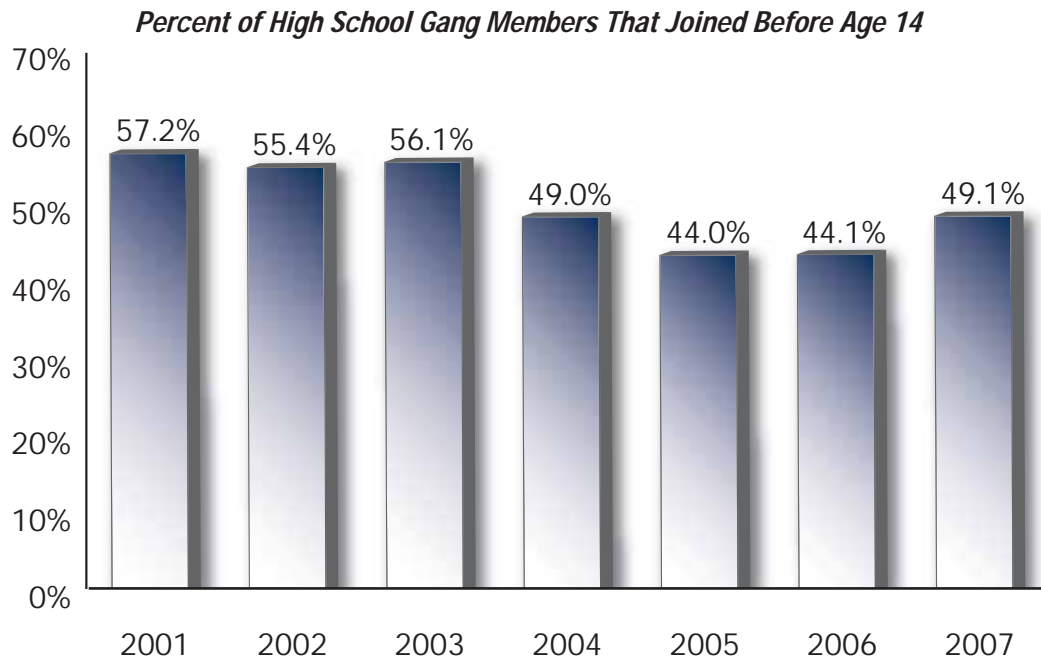
as these represent examples where state and local partnerships can work together toward executing a successful gang reduction strategy. Replicating these partnerships with local knowledge, combined with state resources, will provide continuity and effective re-entry programs for offenders who are members of criminal gangs both in state correctional systems and for those offenders on community supervision.

Both community leaders and the Department of Corrections will call upon members of the coordinating council for any assistance they may be able to give in developing or carrying out this plan for re-entering ex-offenders.

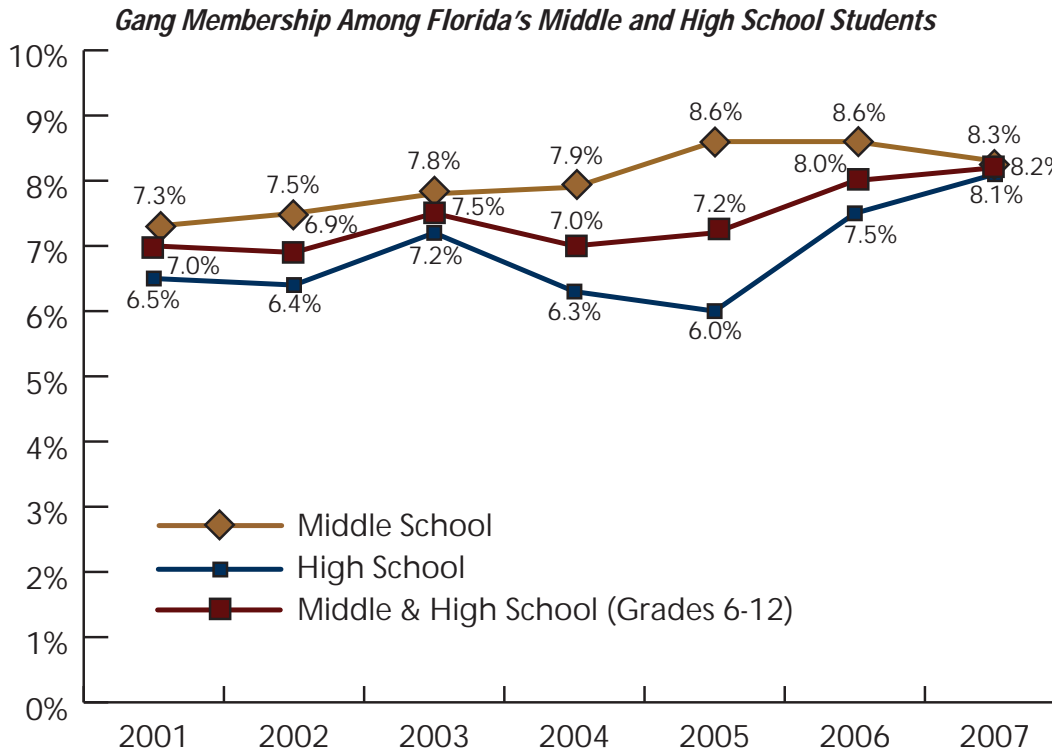
Importance of Metrics

Metrics are essential to the carrying out of the objectives of this strategy. Each regional task force should not only develop a plan for carrying out its objectives, but also devise its own system to measure progress and success. The data to be gathered as described here will be necessary not only as information needed by the regional task force to develop its plans and carry them out, but also for the measurement of success and progress. In the same way, the coordinating council needs this data in order to measure statewide success and be able to determine what adjustments need to be made in the strategy.

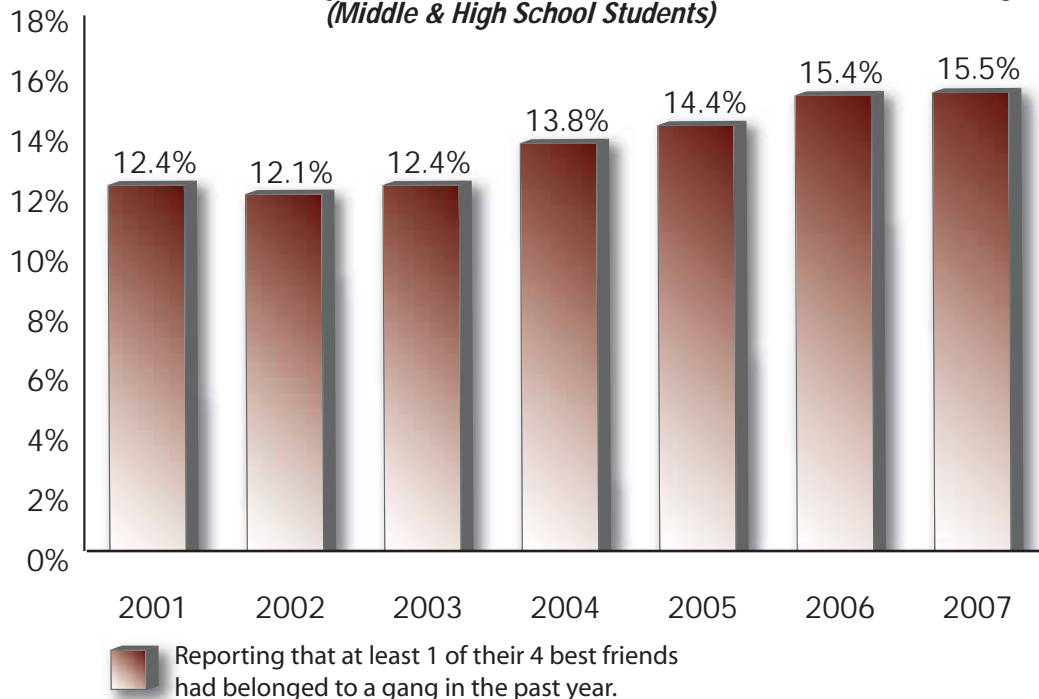
Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)



Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)

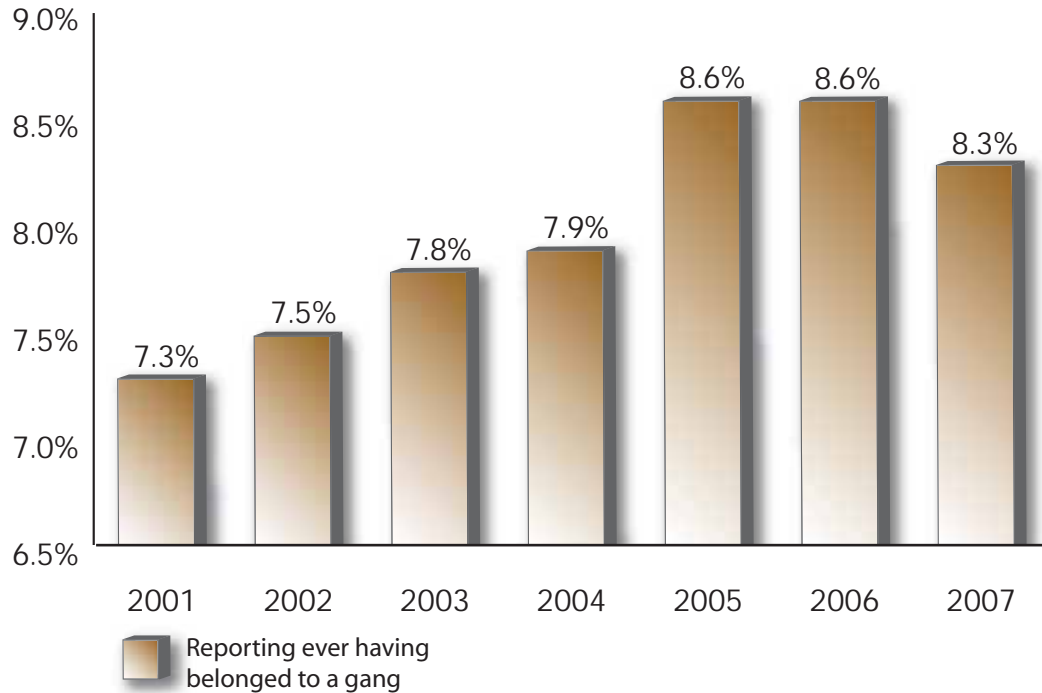


In the Past Year, How Many of Your Four Best Friends Had Been Members of a Gang? (Middle & High School Students)

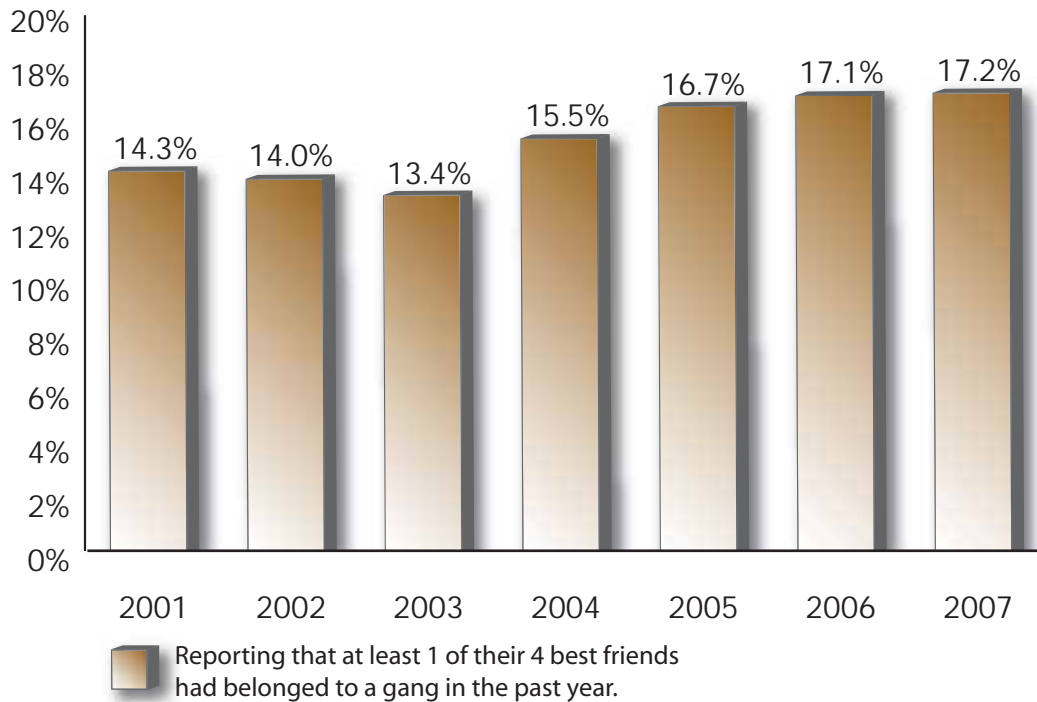


Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)

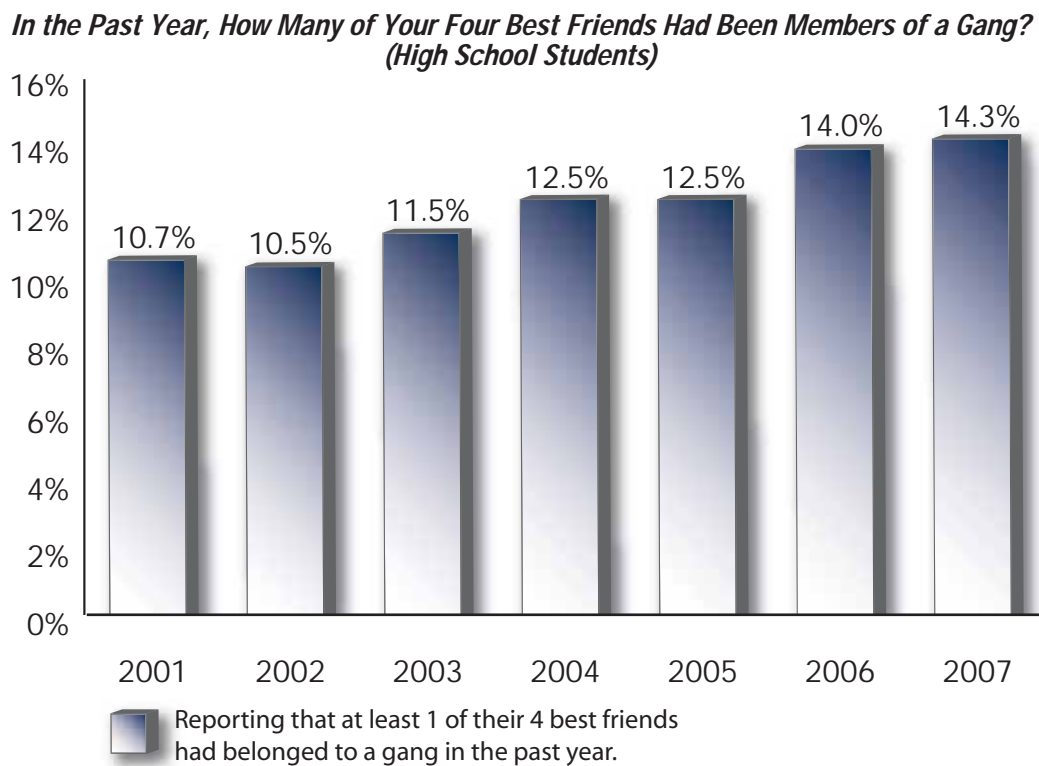
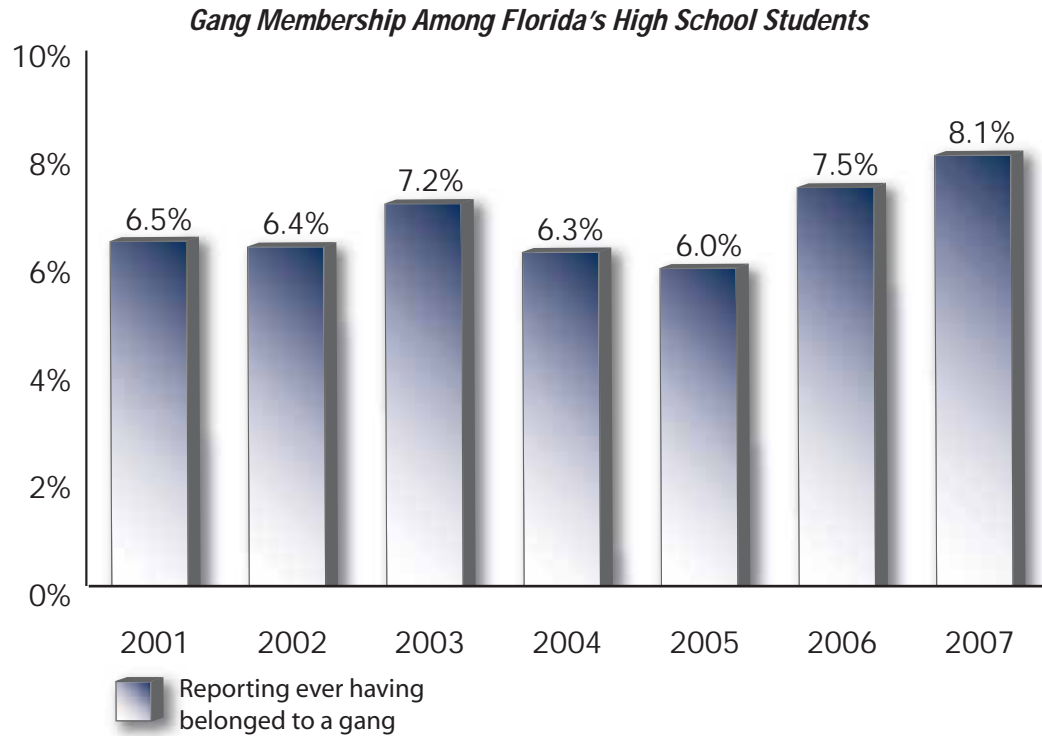
Gang Membership Among Florida's Middle School Students



In the Past Year, How Many of Your Four Best Friends Had Been Members of a Gang? (Middle School Students)



Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)



Resources

The Gang Reduction Strategy is a blueprint for organizing existing resources to stop and reverse the growth of gangs and gang membership in the state and render gangs ineffectual. It does not contemplate any additional government funding or increased manpower. Some re-allocation of existing manpower and resources by different levels of government and non-governmental entities will be necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives. But there are other types of resources available to assist.

All of the state agencies participating in the coordinating council are available to help the regional task forces and their members and participants accomplish the goals and objectives of the strategy. Members of the coordinating council have agreed to donate staff time and resources to carry out its coordinating function and help collect and analyze data and identify materials and assets for the regional task forces.

There are a number of prominent prevention programs around the nation that have had some success in fighting gangs. The regional task forces are urged to review and draw upon these programs for ideas and potential support of their plans. At the same time, each regional task force is expected to build its own plan and carry it out, not simply copy one or more of the other projects or programs.

Where additional funding may be necessary, participants are expected to seek grants from non-profit organizations or the federal government or draw upon support from colleges and universities where funding may have already been obtained for research, pilot projects or the like that could be correlated to the needs of the task forces and participants. There are a number of foundations in Florida and across the nation that have in their charters special interest in contributing to causes

that relate to the gang issues in this strategy. The coordinating council is prepared to assist the regional task forces and participating organizations in seeking support from these foundations.

State Agencies

Each state agency participating in the coordinating council has expertise of its own that could be very valuable to regional task forces and participants in preparing plans and working to achieve the goals and objectives of the strategy. For reference, some of the applicable duties of each state agency are listed here along with an indication of some of their current responsibilities and activities that are related to anti-gang efforts and might give indication of how the agency can assist in the strategy.

Office of the Attorney General

As Florida's chief legal advocate the Attorney General will take the lead in implementing this Gang Reduction Strategy. With the assistance of participating agencies, he will assure the role of the coordinating council is fulfilled and assist the regional task forces in planning and carrying out plans to utilize the strategy.

The Attorney General will pursue enhancements to existing statutes or when appropriate the creation of new laws to combat criminal gangs. The Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution will continue its prosecution of gang members under the criminal racketeering statute. Charging under these laws not only enables prosecutors to seek stronger sentences against gang members, but also hampers the gang's ability to generate the money they need to survive. Using the racketeering charge, authorities target the gang as an organized criminal enterprise, often useful when witnesses or victims are unwilling to testify against gang members.

A Statewide Grand Jury was convened in August 2007 to investigate criminal gang activity. Several indictments have been issued and more are expected. The jurors also studied various criminal issues and made recommendations on needed laws to deter gang activities and punish those involved in these pursuits. A summary of the 1st Interim Report of the Statewide Grand Jury on Criminal Gangs and Gang Related Violence is located in Appendix B of the strategy.

Department of Education

The overarching goal for the Florida Department of Education is the success of all Florida students. The Department sets strategic imperatives to develop and implement standards and measures that focus on high student achievement. School success is a strong protective factor contributing to the prevention of youth engagement in delinquent and other risk behaviors. A student's school success is demonstrated through both academic achievement and level of attachment to school. Low academic performance can contribute to a student's risk for gang affiliation.¹ In addition, a school's ability to engage a student can significantly influence a student's behavior, including risk for gang involvement.² Students who feel connected to school are less likely to engage in violent or deviant behavior.³

There is a direct relationship between safe youth, safe schools, and academic success.⁴ The Centers for Disease Control reported, "Violence at school can inhibit learning, affect school performance, and even reduce school attendance."⁵ The presence of gangs in schools can disrupt the learning process for students, and create a climate of threat, intimidation, and violence. The Department of Education will work with local education agencies to develop and/or enhance existing action plans targeted specifically toward reducing youth gang involvement. The Department will utilize the already existing infrastructure of district contacts for Safety and Security, Safe & Drug Free Schools, and Dropout Prevention to disseminate information regarding best practices for gang awareness training, gang suppression

tactics within schools, gang prevention programs, and targeted gang intervention strategies. District and school level action plans should include a four pronged approach:

Universal Prevention: Strengthen prevention services and positive school climate to improve academic and social outcomes for all students. Strategies/activities include:

- Implement evidence-based substance abuse and violence prevention programs that include anti-gang self-concepts, and teach resiliency skills that empower youth to make good choices and reject gang involvement.
- Implement a school-wide bullying prevention program.
- Provide students with positive role models who offer nurturing, supportive, and caring relationships.
- Employ consistent enforcement of policies and procedures for acceptable student behavior; discipline with positive supports.
- Teach academic skills, social skill development, and critical thinking skills.
- Engage parents/guardians by involving them in actively supervising youth behavior.
- Access business/community resources and create partnerships with community organizations that support positive youth development opportunities such as after-school programs.

Campus Gang Suppression/School Level Targeted Intervention: Partner with law enforcement to create a school safety team to:

- Assess threat of gangs on campus by identifying gangs and gang members on campus and surrounding neighborhoods, by identifying leaders and leadership structure, and by assessing how gangs are affecting campus.
- Establish a neutral school by enforcing policies and procedures that do not tolerate gang identifiers, by removing graffiti,

and by other methods that establish a safe and secure school zone.

- Be consistent with enforcement of gang suppression strategies.
- Implement effective reporting and documentation practices.

Individual Level Intervention: Identify students who are at greater risk for gang recruitment and gang involvement. Types of intervention techniques include:

- Establishing protocols for early identification for risk of gang involvement.
- Employing research-based behavioral intervention methods.
- Providing focused mentoring relationships.
- Making student assistance programs available that provide additional supports for academic, social, and employment skills development.

Parent and Teacher Training and Education:

Be proactive by empowering parents/families and school personnel to be aware of gang activities and gang-involved youth.

- Provide teachers and school personnel with training that includes gang awareness, conflict resolution, de-escalating methods for verbal conflicts, diversity training, self-defense training, and safe techniques to intervene in a fight
- Provide parents and families with gang awareness resources, prevention, and intervention information

Schools can create an organizational structure and culture that do not tolerate gang recruitment or gang activity on their campuses. More significantly, since children spend most of their time at school, schools are an excellent avenue to educate youth and their families about the negative consequences of gang involvement. Prevention and intervention settings can be localized within schools to empower youth to reject gang involvement as well as gang affiliation.

Department of Children and Families

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) protects the vulnerable, promotes strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advances personal and family recovery and resiliency. The DCF delivers foster care, adoption, substance abuse, mental health, homeless and other services through local and community-based organizations. The DCF's services to vulnerable children and youth positions the Department and its partners to support the Gang Reduction Strategy's prevention/intervention pillar through normal daily operations.

Even though most Department of Children and Families services to children and youth have an overall preventative effect, the agency will focus its activities on the most vulnerable populations for gang recruitment – children in foster care and young adults who have aged out of foster care. These children and youth come from dysfunctional families. They do not have strong ties to family or a trusted adult, have low self-esteem, and are likely to be a grade-level or more behind in school. Therefore, the Department of Children and Families, in cooperation with the Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice and the Office of Drug Control will enable children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to develop the skills necessary for successful transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency.

The specific objectives associated with this goal are:

- Ensure youth have an adult who is invested in his or her well-being, especially education.
- Increase the number of youth graduating from high school and post-secondary education.
 - ◆ Increase the educational stability of children in foster care by increasing the number of foster children remaining in their same school, when feasible, or improve the transition between schools and school districts when school moves occur.

- ◆ Facilitate youth having supports to enter into, and complete high school and post-secondary education.
- ◆ Enhance the supports to prevent school dropout, truancy, and disciplinary actions.
- Enhance opportunities and supports for youth to fully participate in all aspects of the primary and secondary school experience as well as activities to enhance normalcy.
- Increase the number of youth who obtain a job that provides a living wage by implementing “Operation Full Employment” to employ 100 youth in foster care in the Department; and challenging statewide employer/agency collaborations that help first-time workers enter and advance in the workplace.
- Continue to support the development and implementation of a transitional living or subsidized independent living housing experience for those youth aging out of foster care at age 17 who will not have the option of remaining in a foster care family home or group home.
- Provide substance abuse and mental health services for youth and families to reduce risk factors for gang involvement.
- Assist Florida communities in developing substance abuse prevention coalitions that implement strategies to reduce environmental factors contributing to gang involvement.

Also, the Department of Children and Families’ Substance Abuse Program Office will collaborate with the Governor’s Office of Drug Control, Department of Health, Department of Education, and Department of Juvenile Justice to administer the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey.

Department of Law Enforcement

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is committed to providing timely and accurate criminal justice information to prevent crime,

solve cases, recover property, and to identify persons with criminal warrants, arrests, and convictions. The FDLE also provides statistical and analytical information about crime to policymakers and the public so that informed decisions can be made regarding the best way to combat and prevent crime. The agency is vital in providing an overall analysis of criminal gang activity and gang-related crime in Florida.

Gathering and deciphering actionable intelligence on criminal gangs is fundamental to successful suppression operations. As part of a comprehensive statewide strategy to address Florida’s violent crime problem, FDLE has partnered with local, state and federal agencies to develop a proactive enforcement effort to focus on major violent crime components which includes an emphasis on criminal gangs. The FDLE has coordinated regional summits with sheriffs, police chiefs, state attorneys, and other partners to discuss current initiatives and proposals to combat violent and gang associated crime throughout the state. The criminal gang component of FDLE’s statewide violent crime strategy includes the following:

- Investigative/Enforcement Operations
 - ◆ Establishing regional advisory groups representing federal, state and local agencies. The advisory groups will meet on a regular basis to enhance existing regional violent crime teams by exchanging gang specific operational and investigative information.
 - ◆ FDLE has also designated a statewide coordinator for its gang-related investigative efforts.
- Intelligence/Information Sharing
 - ◆ Expanding current intelligence structure and designating intelligence agents and analysts in each of FDLE’s seven regions. The unique responsibilities of these agents and analysts will be their focused collection efforts directed by the Office of Statewide Intelligence to identify

current and emerging trends with a priority on criminal gangs.

- ◆ Increasing the automation of gang-related intelligence information through the criminal gang module of Florida Intelligence Site (InSite) which provides law enforcement agencies throughout the state with a secure database of active criminal intelligence and investigative information regarding gangs, gang members and gang-related crimes. FDLE will work with regional analysts to enter local agency intelligence information into InSite and provide InSite training to local law enforcement agencies.



- ◆ Establishing analyst teams/pools in each FDLE region to enhance intelligence and information sharing.
- Violent Fugitive Apprehension
 - ◆ Expanding the use of advanced technology that can aid investigators in rapidly identifying, locating, and apprehending violent criminals using cellular, global positioning satellite and computer technology.
 - ◆ Partnering with the United States Marshal's Office to enhance violent fugitive apprehension efforts statewide with an emphasis on identifying and apprehending known gang members with violent criminal histories involving firearms.
- Training and Awareness Programs
 - ◆ FDLE will provide specialized training to both internal members and local law enforcement on conducting major gang investigations. The

agency will continue to develop and deliver basic, intermediate and advanced violent crime/criminal gang awareness and training for local law enforcement agencies.

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) will provide youth entering their system or in some cases youth at-risk of entering their system, effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services. DJJ is in a position to have considerable influence on a young person's need or decision to become affiliated with a criminal gang. The agency's sustained anti-gang efforts and commitment to prevention will ultimately impact criminal gang activity statewide.

A Statewide Gang Steering Committee was formed within the Department with representatives from all program areas, as well as education, legislative affairs, general counsel, management information systems, and staff development and training. An Action Plan was developed which included:

- A statewide assessment of current gang identification, intervention, and suppression practices.
- A statewide assessment of current gang issues to identify the needs at the local and regional levels.
- A statewide assessment of the current gang training provided to Department personnel.
- Identification of gang awareness curriculum to enhance current training.
- Identification of personnel to serve as:
 - ◆ Regional Gang Coordinators
 - ◆ Circuit Gang Liaisons
 - ◆ Local Gang Representatives
 - ◆ Certified Gang Trainers

The Steering Committee outlined the following areas to be addressed for the Gang Free DJJ Initiative to be successful:

Prevention: develop a comprehensive prevention program in collaboration with local community officials and stakeholders to prevent youth from becoming involved with gangs.

Education: implement curriculum that addresses youth at all levels of gang involvement within our system and to provide additional gang-related training for all direct care staff.

Identification: partner with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to assist in identifying youth affiliated with gangs as determined by statutory criteria through the use of the already established FDLE gang data base InSite. Integrate the InSite system with the Juvenile Justice Information System to afford uploading of information gathered by DJJ personnel.

Intervention: provide services to youth under the supervision of, or in the custody of, the Department that have been identified as gang associates, members, or at-risk to become involved with gangs. DJJ will target evidence-based programs that are proven effective in achieving desired outcomes or will include a research component to interventions that are not already identified as evidence-based.

Suppression: maintain a “Gang Free DJJ” environment within all program areas by the incorporation of a “zero-tolerance” policy for any and all gang activity.

Legislation: secure funding from the Florida Legislature to assist in the implementation of the Gang Free DJJ Initiative.

Beginning with prevention, DJJ is taking a multi-disciplinary approach to combat gangs. DJJ will be reaching out to local law enforcement agen-



cies, the leaders of faith-based programs, community partners, and the citizens of Florida for assistance in its gang reduction efforts.

Working with the most vulnerable children, strengthening families, educating communities, and providing pro-social activities for youth are paramount.

The Department of Juvenile Justice has identified relevant curriculum and is in the process of piloting programs throughout Florida. Youth

who are gang members, associates, or at-risk of recruitment within DJJ facilities and communities shall be provided services to assist them in understanding the dangers of gang involvement and the tools to disassociate from their gang.

Representatives from DJJ have been working side-by-side with FDLE to allow staff to enter gang data that will interface with FDLE's InSite. This collaborative effort will be a resource for law enforcement and will have a tremendous impact on DJJ's ability to keep youth safe while in custody. This database will assist DJJ in identifying youth that are associated with gangs or are gang members, and putting the necessary services in place to meet their needs.

Department of Corrections

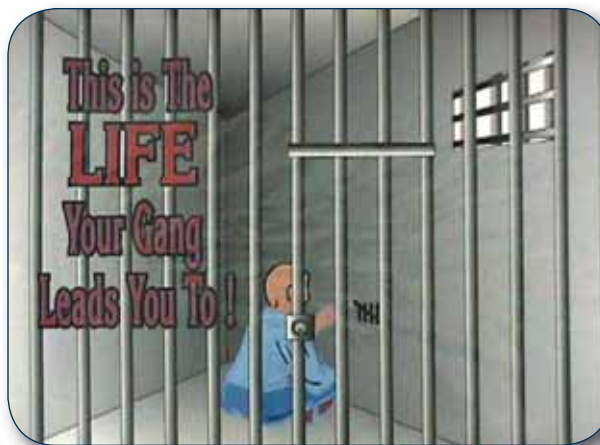
The Florida Department of Corrections will secure all gang members it receives in its prisons, deny them a base of operations or any chance to network, and take disciplinary action whenever any of them seek to continue gang-like behavior. To that end, in 1992 the Department began efforts in identifying the levels of gang activity within its inmate/offender population. Although corrections officials had not realized a significant number of disruptive incidents attributed to gang activity, national trends and an increase in the intake of younger inmates

prompted the formation of the Security Threat Group (STG) management initiative.

The mission of the Security Threat Intelligence Unit (STIU) is to maintain a safe and secure operation for correctional/probation officers, visitors, and inmates/offenders by identifying, certifying and monitoring STG activity, coordinating all intelligence with fellow criminal justice agencies, and providing community awareness programs and education. After placement in the correctional system, the inmates prone to gang membership tend to mirror gangs in the community. An exception to the similarity exists in that prison gangs tend to gravitate and identify along racial lines, whereas the majority of gangs reported in Florida are multi-cultural allegiances.

The result is the comprehensive intelligence gathering program that has given Florida a “blueprint” of gang activity. The STIU is now recognized as a national leader in STG identification, assessment and management. Although the STIU’s primary focus is on inmates and offenders, the unit is committed to sharing what they learn with other criminal justice agencies and the public.

In response to the staggering statistics on the projected inmate population, the Department of Corrections has made reducing recidivism a major focus. It is important to note that each year approximately 34,000 inmates are released from the Department of Corrections.⁶ The STIU will continue to expand their synchronization with outside agencies by notifying local law enforcement when a gang member is released from prison. By enhanced coordination with local law enforcement, communities will be able to monitor, and when appropriate, provide services for the reintegration, or in some cases, the integration of a former gang member into a productive, law-abiding citizen.



To accomplish the task of offender reintegration the Department of Corrections changed its mission in May 2007 to state, “To protect the public, ensure the safety of Department personnel, and provide for the proper care and supervision of all offenders under our jurisdiction while assisting, as appropriate, their re-entry into society.” Coupled

with this change to the mission statement, the Department set a goal of bringing the recidivism rate down from its present rate of 32% to 20% or less by 2012. The Department envisions that, if accomplished, the criminal justice system will see a significant reduction in the demands that repeat offenders exert and provide safer communities for the citizens of Florida and those who visit the state.

In addition to the re-entry of offenders, the Department of Corrections has also been contributing many hours annually in community service projects through inmate labor. Aside from contracting with the Florida Department of Transportation and local communities to keep roads, highways, and parks clean, communities and civic organizations can contract with the Department to aggressively eliminate gang graffiti and the other visible stains left by gangs. Graffiti and gang “tagging” are stigmas on Florida’s communities and without an effective means to continually remove them gangs continue to mark their territory on roads, buildings, and signs. Being vigilant and not tolerating any gang defacing neighborhoods will amplify the collective community resistance to gangs.

Office of Drug Control

The Florida Office of Drug Control (ODC), located in the Executive Office of the Governor, collaborates with the Office of Planning and Budget to implement a statewide drug abatement strategy that utilizes a three-pronged approach of drug



abuse prevention, treatment and counter-narcotics law enforcement efforts to limit the devastation of substance abuse in Florida's diverse communities.

The Office of Drug Control has developed powerful and persuasive prevention campaigns that the Gang Reduction Strategy can build upon. By working closely with other state and local agencies in the development of evidence-based prevention practices, substantial positive increases in Florida's youth rejecting the use of tobacco, illegal drugs and prescription drug abuse have been achieved over the past seven years.

In addition to lending expertise on drug abuse prevention campaigns, the Office of Drug Control has also developed anti-drug prevention coalitions in all 67 Florida counties. These associations have been instrumental in developing and implementing best practices in their community to address those substance abuse problems germane to their area. Leaders in Florida's neighborhoods reject the idea that their cities cannot overcome problems relating to substance abuse. Rather, they have banded together to create broad based initiatives that have helped stem the tide of drug abuse in our state. Gang reduction efforts will therefore seek to mirror the successes that have been built by the Florida Office of Drug Control, and leverage the ODC's expertise to get these 67 drug prevention coalitions to adopt a wider mission.

The Office of Drug Control is uniquely positioned to develop and enhance initiatives for both gang prevention/intervention and suppression. First,

because gangs derive much strength from narcotics distribution, continuing ODC's successes in decreasing demand for drugs through effective drug prevention and treatment programs acts to reduce the potential financial resources available to gang-connected drug dealers. Simply put, fewer drug users mean fewer customers, and no business survives without customers. Secondly, in addition to their efforts to reduce drug demand, the Office of Drug Control has also played a critical role in furthering statewide law enforcement coordination by assisting with multiple statewide counterdrug interdiction operations over the past decade.

Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), Division of the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), aggressively attempts to reduce criminal activities occurring on Florida's highways through detection, prevention, and enforcement of criminal laws relating to highway violence, transportation of illegal drugs/contraband, auto theft, driver license fraud, and other criminal activities. The work of the Department promotes a safe driving environment through aggressive law enforcement, public education, and safety awareness by reducing the number and severity of traffic crashes in Florida, preserving and protecting human life, property, and the rights of all people in accordance with the constitutions and laws of the United States and the state of Florida.

The Florida Highway Patrol, Bureau of Investigations, is responsible for criminal investigations involving driver's license fraud which at times involves identity theft, motor vehicle theft, title fraud, cargo theft, and other criminal activities associated with motor vehicles and drivers. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, statistical data shows the number of cases of identity theft and credit card thefts being perpetrated by gang members has increased dramatically.

There are ten Florida Highway Patrol troops geographically located throughout the state that

participate in multi-agency operations and local task force operations. One of the local task force actions that targets violent criminals is Operation Safe Streets, which is a joint operation between the Florida Highway Patrol and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. This program emphasizes high visibility patrol in geographic areas that are statistically over-represented in criminal activity. The FHP participates in the Multi-Agency Gang Task Force of Southwest Florida and in Palm Beach County, and troopers also participate in the Violent Crime Task Force.

An essential part of the FHP is their Contraband Interdiction Program (CIP), which consists of specially trained troopers designated as felony officers and canine handlers. These troopers are strategically assigned throughout the state to patrol the interstate system and other highways in order to interdict drug couriers and other criminal activity. The CIP assists other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in the detection and apprehension of drug traffickers and other criminal offenders that utilize the roadways of Florida. The CIP is an active participant in various enforcement operations coordinated by the Florida Office of Drug Control.

International, and to a smaller extent local criminal gangs, are aware of Florida's position as an entry point for both legal and illegal products from around the world. The highway system will not succumb to unabated, widespread use by criminal gangs. The CIP is equipped with sophisticated drug detection equipment, such as fiber optic scopes, drug detection devices, electronic measuring devices, dual-purpose canines, and various other tools. The program will be important to cut off criminal gangs' ability to traffic illegal drugs or conduct other illegal activities across Florida's vast highway system.

During the period 2003-2007 the FHP seized 5,821 pounds of marijuana, 1,354 pounds of cocaine, 11 pounds of crack cocaine, 36 pounds of heroin, 15 pounds of methamphetamine, 9.1 million dollars in U.S. currency and other types of illegal drugs, paraphernalia, and weapons. The

total value of illegal drugs seized in this period is 25.1 million dollars. These seizures resulted from 7,464 drug cases and 16,209 drug related arrests.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, gangs are heavily involved in and use drug trafficking as their primary means of financial gain. Collectively, these efforts can have a significant impact on the financial resources of many gangs operating in Florida. The Florida Highway Patrol remains a key ally on the front lines of interrupting the flow of drugs and weapons. By providing enhanced training and through effective cooperation the FHP is positioned statewide to gather and share vital intelligence, apprehend gang members in transit, and keep Florida's highways safe.

Well Known Existing Prevention Programs

There are many efforts that have been made across the nation to fight criminal gangs. Some have been more successful than others. Some have worked for a while and then not been so successful. All have some merit and may provide guidelines and ideas for the regional task forces to draw upon. What follows is a brief outline of some of the more prominent of these programs and projects.

OJJDP Comprehensive Model

On February 15, 2006, the Department of Justice launched an initiative to combat gang violence, under its Project Safe Neighborhoods. The strategy is twofold. First, prioritize prevention programs to provide America's youth and offenders returning to the community with opportunities that help them resist gang involvement. Second, ensure robust enforcement policies when gang-related violence does occur.

As reported in the most recent National Youth Gang Survey, some 760,000 gang members and 24,000 gangs were active in more than 2,900 U.S. jurisdictions in 2004, representing all 50 states and all cities with a population over 250,000. As most gang members join between the ages of 12

and 15, prevention is a critical strategy within a comprehensive response to gangs that includes law enforcement, prosecution, and re-entry.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) developed a Comprehensive Gang Model that communities in Florida can use to build sustained coalitions. The model is based on five core strategies, with an emphasis on accurate, data driven assessments of the problem as being critical for the model to work. The following program development process will facilitate implementing the five core strategies, they include:

1. Acknowledgment of the problem. The presence of a youth gang problem must be recognized before anything meaningful can be done to address it. If denial is present, it must be confronted.

2. Assessment of the problem. Those with responsibility for addressing the problem—representatives of police, schools, probation, youth agencies, grass-roots organizations, government, and others—participate in identifying its nature and causes and recommend appropriate responses. The assessment results in an understanding of who is involved in gang crime and where in the community it is concentrated. This, in conjunction with other data and information, enables targeting:

- Gang-involved youth
- The most violent gangs
- The area(s) where gang crime most often occurs

3. Setting goals and objectives. Once the problem is described, goals and objectives based on the assessment findings are established. These should emphasize changes the Steering Committee wants to bring about in the target area.

4. Relevant services and activities. Rationales for services, tactics, and policies and procedures that involve each of the key agencies are articulated and then implemented for each of the five core strategies. These activities must be closely coordinated or integrated to ensure that the work of collaborating agencies is complementary. Representatives of those organizations that will have

the most direct contact with the target youth—police, probation, schools, and youth workers—should form an Intervention Team and have regular meetings to share critical information, plan, and act collaboratively on individual youth and gang activity in the target area. Thus, the resources of collaborating agencies are focused on a group of young people who are involved in gangs.

It is important to remember that while youth gang members must be held accountable for their criminal acts, they also must be provided with services for their academic, economic, and social needs. Gang members must be encouraged to control their behavior and to participate in legitimate mainstream activities. At the same time, external controls on gang and gang-member behavior must be exercised. For some gang members, secure confinement will be necessary. For others, graduated degrees of community-based supervision, ranging from continuous sight or electronic supervision to incarceration, will be appropriate. It is important that youth understand that they will face consequences if they do not follow rules, laws, conditions, or reasonable expectations of the program. It also may be important to develop a set of incentives for compliance with the program. Thus, a range of services and sanctions is required, often in some interactive way. To be effective in this approach, an understanding of how a youth's family, peers, and others are involved is important.

This approach is very consistent with community policing, which promotes and supports organizational strategies to address and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and community-police partnerships. In this Model, gang unit, community policing, or other officers are involved in the problem-solving process at the street level while senior officers work with the policy makers.

The work of the collaborating agencies is overseen by a Steering Committee of policy or decision makers from agencies and organizations that have an interest in or responsibility for addressing the community's gang problem. These representatives should not only set policy and oversee the

overall direction of the gang program, but they should take responsibility for spearheading efforts in their own organizations to remove barriers to services, and to social and economic opportunities; develop effective criminal justice, school, and social agency procedures; and promote policies that will further the goals of the gang strategy.

5. Evaluation. Results from evaluations have shown that the Model is effective in lowering crime rates among youth gang members. Preliminary results from an evaluation of five communities chosen as demonstration sites for the Model show that a combination of intervention, suppression, and prevention strategies, along with a coordinated team approach to delivering services, are effective in having a positive impact on reducing gang crime. For these reasons, the incorporation of a strong evaluation component as the initiative is taking form and throughout the life of the program is critical to assessing the impact of the program. Using the five core strategies, the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model supports a multifaceted approach that includes eight critical elements.

1. Initial and continuous problem assessment using qualitative and quantitative data
2. Targeting of the area and those populations of individuals most closely associated with the problem, as described in the assessment
3. Mix of the five key strategies: community mobilization, social intervention, opportunities provision, suppression, and organizational change/ development
4. A Steering Committee to oversee and guide the project
5. A direct contact intervention team that includes police, probation, outreach staff, and others
6. A plan for coordinating efforts of and sharing appropriate information among those who work with the youth on a daily basis, the Steering Committee, and persons within the partner organizations

7. Community capacity building to sustain the project and address issues that are long-term in nature
8. Ongoing data collection and analysis to inform the process and evaluate its impact

These eight elements should be used to focus interventions toward specific types of criminal gangs (from sophisticated to loosely organized gangs) and varying levels of the problem (violent crimes, drug distribution, robbery or property crimes).

OJJDP's Gang Reduction Program is designed to reduce gang activity in targeted neighborhoods by incorporating a broad spectrum of research-based interventions to address the range of personal, family, and community factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency and gang activity. The program integrates local, state, and federal resources to incorporate state-of-the-art practices in prevention, intervention, and suppression. As part of this program, OJJDP has developed a Strategic Planning Tool to help communities assess and address local youth gang problems.

The Gang Reduction Program is funding pilot sites in four communities characterized by significant existing program investment, strong indicators of citizen involvement, and high rates of crime and gang activity. The sites are located in:

- East Los Angeles, CA (Mayor's Office for the City of Los Angeles).
- Milwaukee, WI (Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance).
- North Miami Beach, FL (Florida Governor's Office of Drug Control).
- Richmond, VA (Virginia Attorney General's Office).

The latest gang-related resources may be found on OJJDP's Web site at:

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/antigang>.

The PanZOu Project, Inc.

The PanZOu Project, Inc. (Gang Reduction Program) in North Miami Beach, FL began as a grant funded

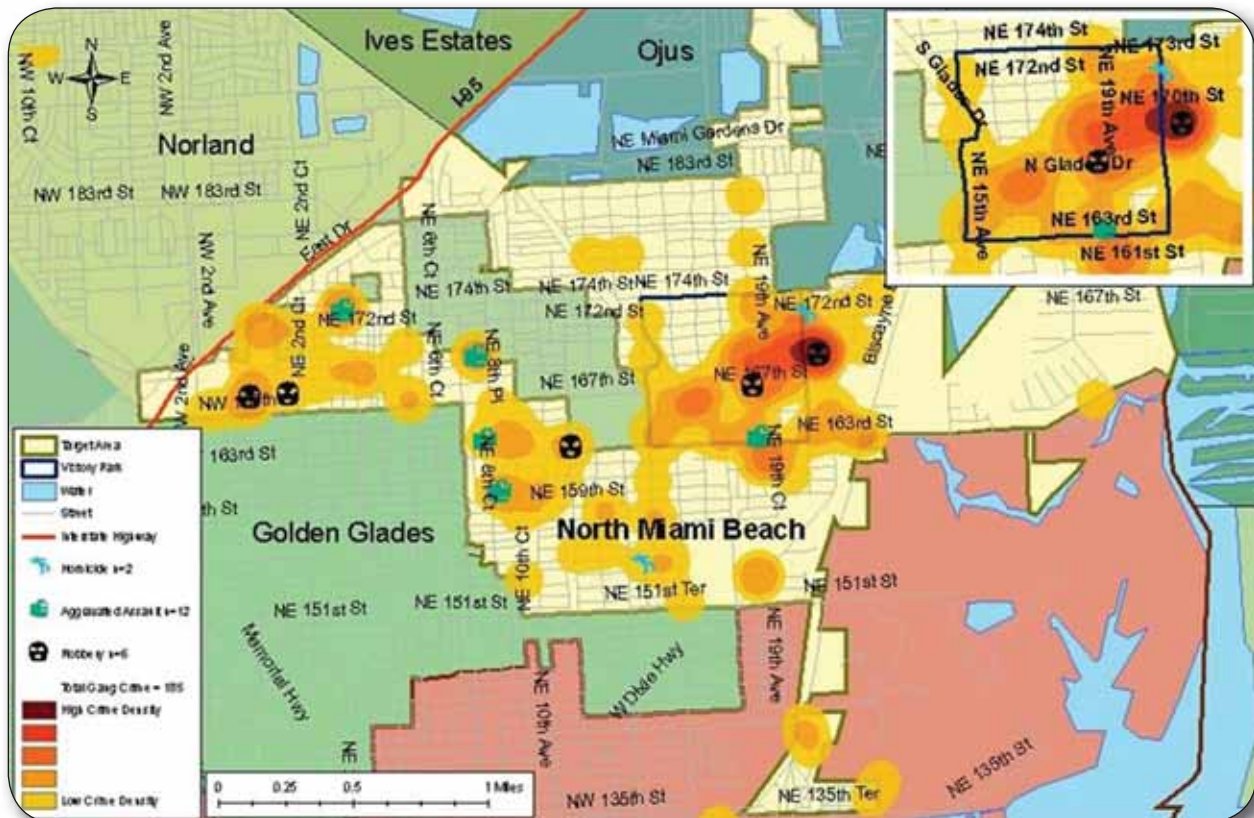
program through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The goal of the grant, awarded to the Florida Governor’s Office of Drug Control, was to reduce gang membership in the city of North Miami Beach. Initiated in 2004, the PanZOu Project is one of four pilot sites in the nation to receive the \$2.5 million grant.

The main goal of the PanZOu Project is to significantly reduce Haitian youths’ involvement in gang activity in the North Miami Beach area. The plan incorporates a broad spectrum of proven, research-based interventions designed to address the full range of personal, family, and community factors that contribute to high levels of juvenile delinquency and gang activity. This comprehensive gang model focuses resources in primary and secondary prevention, intervention, and enforcement initiatives to stabilize and build pro-social influences in challenged neighborhoods.

The PanZOu Project is overseen by a committed group of professionals representing numerous criminal justice agencies and community and

faith-based organizations. The steering committee is comprised of the following members:

- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- Florida Office of Drug Control
- North Miami Beach Senior High
- Fulford United Methodist Church
- Miami Dade Juvenile Services Dept.
- Mayor, City of North Miami Beach
- North Miami Beach Police Dept.
- City of North Miami Beach Parks and Recreation
- City of North Miami Beach Neighborhood Services
- The Miami Coalition
- U.S. Attorney’s Office
- Greater Miami Neighborhoods
- Washington/Allen Park Weed & Seed
- Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center
- Haitian Community Liaison



- State Attorney's Office Community Outreach Division
- State Attorney's Office Gang Strike Force
- University of Miami
- Communities in Schools
- Children's Psychiatric Center
- Community Members
- Police Eliminating Truancy Program
- Strengthening Families Parenting Skills Program
- Intensive Case Management
- D.I.V.A's (Developing Intelligent Voices of America) girls group
- Man-UP! young men's group
- Youth Employment Program

The role of the steering committee includes ensuring that the Gang Reduction Program is implemented according to the strategic plan identifying challenges and obstacles to implementing the program and solutions for overcoming such challenges. In addition, the steering committee also provide oversight in decisions regarding the effectiveness of the programs/strategies implemented, review and advise on terms of subcontracting and/or continuation of subcontracting, and assist in identifying the most effective strategies for future subcontracts.

Research has proven that the most effective gang reduction model offers a range of programs that target the risk and protective factors of a community at various levels. The following outlines our best practice prevention, intervention and enforcement strategies for the Haitian community in North Miami Beach.

Primary Prevention

- Funded the Victory Park Neighborhood Resource Center in the target hot spot
- Early Literacy After School Program for 1st – 4th graders
- Midnight Basketball Program with Youth Empowerment Training
- Haitian Creole Festival and Teen Hip Hop Summit
- Community workshops on criminal/juvenile justice and child welfare systems
- Presentations and training to community agencies, parents, and school
- Secondary Prevention
- Alternative to Suspension Program

Intervention

- Street Outreach
- Intensive Case management
- Multi-Disciplinary Intervention Team (police, probation, outreach, schools, service providers)
- 6 Rounds to Success Boxing Program
- On The Job Training Program
- Individual/Family Therapy
- Enforcement
- Foot Patrol in target area hot spot
- Gang Unit Intelligence and Response Team
- Data tracking
- Gang Enforcement and Prosecution Training
- Multi-disciplinary intervention team members sharing information and referrals

The PanZOu Project, together with the North Miami Beach Police Department and the Urban Institute, mapped gang crime and violence and determined the neighborhoods in most need of targeted enforcement as well as social services. By combining suppression activities and social services in the hot spot communities, the project reduced crime significantly in those neighborhoods.

Information regarding the PanZOu Project is available on line at:

<http://www.northmiamibeach.govoffice.com>.

MPACT Project

The Miami Partnership for Action in Communities Task Force Project (MPACT) is an anti-gang program which was started in 2001 as a demonstra-

tion model funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and awarded to the Miami-Dade Schools Police. The funding for the demonstration project was awarded to four major cities in the United States: Miami, Cleveland, Houston, and Pittsburgh.

It is based on a previous model used in Chicago to reduce gang-related criminality among youths in urban communities. The program follows five main strategies: suppression, social intervention, organizational change, opportunities provision and community mobilization. The project began by recruiting at-risk youth between the ages of 12-22.

To prevent youth from joining or falling back into a criminal gang, MPACT Project provides opportunities that foster positive life choices. It is the project's conviction that youth who are given an opportunity to become productive citizens will select an honest path and turn away from engaging in criminal activities. Once the candidates have been assessed and identified as eligible for programmatic services, the project offers the targeted youth a wide range of collaborative programmatic services. The services include:

- Opportunities in cultivating their minds
- Marketable skills training and development
- Personal development, while raising their self-esteem and confidence

The personal development component emphasizes work ethics. Experiences gained in the program have been shown to facilitate a youth's successful transition into the workforce and to positively cultivate their self-esteem and self-worth. Along with personal development, the OJT program is the main intervention strategy of the project. The OJT component expands the classroom learning experience by promoting youth participation in the labor market. The goal of the OJT program is to provide youths an opportunity to learn and apply marketable employment skills, which in turn fosters positive life choices and decreases the likelihood of criminality. The outcomes from Project MPACT have demonstrated that when the targeted youth in the program are given the opportunity

to become socially-contributing and economically-independent members of society, the participants of the project have chosen to participate in legal and worthwhile endeavors.

The outcomes so far achieved demonstrate that, when given the opportunity, the targeted youth have immense possibilities to become socially-contributing and economically-independent members of society. That is the goal of every participating member of the project. MPACT is currently located in the northern end of Dade County and the long term goal is to spread throughout the county as the "best practices" model for gang intervention. One of MPACT Project's long term goals is to expand throughout the state of Florida.

Information about MPACT Project is available online at: <http://www.mpact.dadeschools.net>.

AMER-I-CAN Program

Both the Amer-I-Can Program and the Amer-I-Can Foundation were founded in 1993, by NFL Hall of Fame running back and motion picture actor, Jim Brown, who through many years of experience as a community activist, recognized that in order to be successful, the attitude of the recipient is paramount.

The Amer-I-Can Foundation for Social Change (AFFSC) operates nationally. The Amer-I-Can Foundation has affected positive change in the lives of tens of thousands of young people through life management skills training in schools, juvenile camps and communities. Additionally, Amer-I-Can has trained thousands of prison inmates, police officers, and deputies across the United States.

Among its most recent accomplishments, Amer-I-Can initiated a gang truce and cease fire agreement between rival gangs in Los Angeles, resulting in a significant reduction in gang-related homicides.

Currently Amer-I-Can is running pilot programs in schools in three Florida counties: Manatee, Hillsborough and Brevard Counties. They started in the fall of 2007 and early signs of success are

remarkably good. Students identified for the program all have problems with school. Facilitators use a special curriculum to instill positive attitudes and motivate students to success that has eluded them. The program is based on a belief that the failure in personal development and the lack of self-esteem are the root causes of the aforementioned problems that plague our society today.

By enlarging the scope of individual lives, introducing them to self-determination techniques, motivating them with goals, and showing them how to improve and achieve success and financial stability, lives will be saved that now seem to be lost.

The challenge of achieving one's full potential is at the center of the program. This life-management skills training program is designed to empower participants to take responsibility for their own self-determination. The program works with those whom society disregards, contending that it is never too late to attain a full, meaningful life.

Amer-I-Can is comprised of the Amer-I-Can Program, which is a 60 to 90 hour, 15 chapter Life Management Skills curriculum that is designed to empower individuals to take charge of their lives, and the Amer-I-Can Foundation for Social Change, a non-profit organization created to offer social support and services to underserved populations and cities.

More information on The Amer-I-Can Program is available on their website at:

<http://www.amer-i-can.org> or at 2410 Gibsonwoods Court NW, Salem, Oregon 97304, 503-391-2685 (phone), 503-391-2685 (fax), info@amer-i-can.org.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America offers a program called "Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach." This program is offered as one approach to resolving Florida's ever-growing gang dilemma. This comprehensive approach uses effective techniques and strategies that direct at risk young people to positive alternatives offered by Boys & Girls Clubs statewide. Through an established referral

network of linkages by local Clubs with courts, police, other juvenile justice agencies, schools, social service agencies and community organizations, as well as through direct outreach efforts, youth will be recruited and mainstreamed into Club programs as a diversion from gang activity.

The Targeted Outreach approach acknowledges that youth most at risk of gang involvement are not seeking the constructive environment that Clubs have to offer. Through this initiative, programs are created to excite and attract targeted youth. Boys & Girls Clubs will provide positive, constructive activities that meet both the interests and needs of targeted youth. The Targeted Outreach approach is comprised of four components:

1. Community Mobilization
2. Recruitment
3. Mainstreaming and Programming
4. Case Management

Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Florida will work with key community agencies to complete a community youth gang assessment. Additionally, they will assist in mobilizing community leaders along with Club staff to identify their roles and develop a community-wide strategy associated with each of the seven identified Regional Task Forces.

The project will use two primary ways to actively reach out and recruit youth at-risk of gang involvement:

- Direct Outreach (Boys & Girls Clubs' youth development professionals will use various techniques to get to know young people outside the Club and encourage them to join the Club).
- Referral (Community organizations or agencies can refer youth to any one of the 43 Alliance Member Organizations located throughout Florida).

Upon recruitment, the targeted youth will be mainstreamed into regular Club programs in a non stigmatizing way, while tracking and case management services are provided for a full-year of participation.

A more detailed description of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's programming can be found on their various website and at program locations throughout the state. <http://www.bgca.org/programs/>

More information on The Boys and Girls Clubs of America is available on their website at: <http://www.bgca.org/programs> or by contacting: Daniel Lyons, Executive Director of the Florida Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs at: P.O. Box 10334, Tallahassee, Florida 32302-2334 – Office 229-768-3395, Fax 229-768-2330

Phoenix Gang Intervention & Prevention

The Phoenix Project is an Intervention and Prevention Program for High-Risk Youth, which is based in New Jersey but their highly successful and innovative resources are used nationwide to address the risk factors underlying gang recruitment and gang involvement, and provide concrete tools for both gang intervention programs and gang prevention programs. It provides evidence-based treatment and curriculum resources for use in correctional, probation, parole, detention, diversion, community, and school programs.

The Phoenix Gang Intervention and Prevention program is a curriculum-based approach to building practical self-efficacy for delinquent youth, including gang members, to learn and practice the skills needed to resist risk factors, enhance protective factors, and to construct productive, crime-free lives. The mission of the Phoenix curriculum is to provide participants with the knowledge, skill, and attitudes necessary to change their lives and stop cycles of gang activity and involvement in the criminal justice system. The program is constructed on a foundation of two critical goals:

1. Guide participants to develop practical self-efficacy in identifying and addressing the highest risk factors for substance abuse, violence, gang involvement, and other crimes. Participants learn to recognize high risk people, places, things, and situations, and acquire the necessary competence and con-

fidence to handle these risks effectively by repeatedly practicing strategies and skills. Examples of these strategies and skills include: problem avoidance, problem-solving, refusal and escape skills, asking for help from safe and supportive people, feelings management, self-monitoring, use of emotional intelligence, and impulse control.

2. Guide participants to identify and enhance critical protective factors or assets which can help them achieve productive, crime-free lives.

Participants learn the fundamentals of character education, how to build values and behaviors that will lead to the selection of friends that are not gang affiliated, having empathy for others, developing positive goals and personal support systems, and participating in positive community organizations and activities.

Criminal gang influence and activities vary by community and Florida's prevention approach must be explicit for the needs of the community. The Phoenix Curriculum is extensive and can be specifically tailored to the requirements of a school or community. The program has a logical progression and is based on cognitive-behavioral treatment concepts.

More information regarding the Phoenix Project is available on their website at: <http://www.gangprograms.com>.

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) Program

In 1991, the G.R.E.A.T. program was developed through a combined effort of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Phoenix Police Department (PPD). The program began as an eight-lesson middle school curriculum that, in 1992, led to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) joining forces with ATF and the PPD to expand the program nationwide. FLETC provided the support necessary to train G.R.E.A.T. instructors, and during that same year the first G.R.E.A.T. Officer Training was held. In 1998, the program added

additional law enforcement agencies to assist in administering the program, and Florida's Orange County Sheriff's Office was selected as one of the law enforcement agencies.

The G.R.E.A.T. program is a school-based, law enforcement officer-instructed classroom curriculum. With prevention as its primary objective, the program is intended as an immunization against delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership.

G.R.E.A.T. has developed partnerships with nationally recognized organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the National Association of Police Athletic Leagues. These partnerships encourage positive relationships among the community, parents, schools, and law enforcement officers.

G.R.E.A.T. lessons focus on providing life skills to students to help them avoid using delinquent behavior and violence to solve problems. The G.R.E.A.T. program offers a continuum of components for students and their families.

The G.R.E.A.T. program consists of four components: a 13-session middle school curriculum, an elementary school curriculum, a summer program, and families training.

Five regional training centers provide training to sworn law enforcement officers to teach the G.R.E.A.T. curriculum in elementary and middle schools across the country.

More information regarding the G.R.E.A.T. program is available on their website at: <http://www.great-online.org> or at: G.R.E.A.T. Program Training Coordinator, Institute for Intergovernmental Research, Post Office Box 12729, Tallahassee, FL 32317-2729; Phone: (800) 726-7070; Fax: (850) 386-5356; E-mail: information@great-online.org.

Project Safe Neighborhoods

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking existing local programs that target

gun crime and providing these programs with additional tools necessary to be successful. The Bush Administration committed over \$1.5 billion to this effort since PSN's inception in 2001. This funding is being used to hire new federal and state prosecutors, support investigators, provide training, distribute gun lock safety kits, deter juvenile gun crime, and develop and promote community outreach efforts as well as to support other gun violence reduction strategies.

The initiative has been effectively increasing federal firearm prosecution, and has achieved a higher rate of successful firearm prosecutions.

Working in conjunction with local law enforcement, U.S. Attorneys in each of the 94 federal judicial districts have adapted the PSN strategy to fit the distinctive gun crime problem in their district. PSN was not built on a "one size fits all" approach, and each region or city has developed unique solutions germane to the needs of their community. Each district has designated a Project Safe Neighborhood point of contact in the U.S. Attorney's Office to serve as the project coordinator and facilitate communication. Each U.S. Attorney is also encouraged to create specialized units within their office to target the most significant gun crime problems within their district. These specialized units have a narrower application of the initiative and will provide for maximum impact to ensure the safety of our communities.

Project Safe Neighborhood has five elements that are required for a vigorous and successful gun crime reduction; they include partnerships, strategic planning, training, community outreach and public awareness, and accountability. These elements make it possible for increased prosecutions of violent organizations by aggressively using federal conspiracy, racketeering, narcotics, and all other available laws to attack and punish criminal gangs. Each district also engages in deterrence and prevention efforts through community outreach and media campaigns, and ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors have the training necessary to make the program work.

On September 26–28, 2007, the Department of Justice (DOJ) sponsored the Project Safe Neighborhoods Anti-Gang Training pilot in Dover, Delaware. Approximately 160 law enforcement agents and criminal justice practitioners attended the training, which presented the gang expertise of DOJ law enforcement and criminal justice professionals in a comprehensive curriculum. Intervention, prevention, suppression and re-entry strategies were presented, as well as a briefing on national and regional gang trends, a community gang problem assessment, and tips for working with cooperating witnesses and confidential informants.

Due to the success of the pilot program and the positive feedback and suggestions received from attendees, twelve Anti-Gang Training sessions will be offered in 2008 at various locations throughout the country. In response to popular demand, the 2008 training programs will feature a separate track for gang prevention and intervention personnel. Visit <http://www.iir.com/psnagt/> for more information and to view the courses that are offered, or download the promotional flier.

More information about Project Safe Neighborhoods is available on their website at: <http://www.psn.gov>.

Boston Gun Project (Operation Ceasefire)

The Boston Gun Project is a suppression program that targets youth and adult gang members in a multiagency effort. It is based on an analysis of homicide among Boston's youth (age 21 and under) that determined that this violence is gang centered, neighborhood based, and concentrated in a small number of repeat-offending, gang-involved youth. The program was initiated in individual neighborhoods with an explicit communication campaign. This campaign begins with an orientation for community groups and is then often carried out face-to-face with gang members, who are given the message that gang violence has provoked a zero tolerance approach and that only an end to gang violence will stop new gang-focused suppression activities. The long sentences that offenders receive

are publicized in high-crime neighborhoods. The program components described above build upon and integrate the efforts of grassroots organizations and the faith-based community.

A multiagency, coordinated task force of 45 full-time Boston police officers and others from outside agencies suppresses youth and adult gang violence and gun use. Suppression tactics include “pulling levers” to impose costs on offenders related to their chronic offending by serving warrants, enforcing probation restrictions, and deploying Federal enforcement powers.

Under another component of the program—Operation Night Light—police and probation officers, working in teams, make nightly visits to the homes of youth on probation to ensure that they are complying with the terms and conditions of their probation. This helps target tough enforcement efforts against gang leaders. City “streetworkers” (gang prevention and mediation specialists) also work in tandem with police and probation officers, helping resolve conflicts and linking youth who want help with needed services.

Simultaneously, the Boston Gun Project seeks to interrupt the self-sustaining cycle of fear, weapon use, and violence that appears to be driving youth violence in the city by reducing use of guns with a “coerced use-reduction” strategy and reducing access to firearms. To carry out this deterrence strategy, gang mediation specialists are deployed to gang hotspots, which are generally already known through mapping that shows gang overlap, intergang conflicts, and gun-related crime. Heightened surveillance for shootings, assaults, and other selected incidents triggers deployment of interagency crisis intervention teams with “swift and comprehensive attention.” After this “calming” operation, patrol officers continue to monitor the hotspot for reoccurrence of gun violence.

The strategy that reduces access to firearms, using gun-tracing capabilities of the Boston Police Department and ATF, seeks to disrupt the illicit gun market. The rationale supporting the supply-reduction strategy is that disruption of the illicit

market will interrupt fear-driven gun acquisition and use, thereby reducing gang violence in Boston. Using Federal firearm laws, the project “makes the market much less hospitable by strategically removing the most dangerous gang and drug offenders from the streets, and stemming the flow of firearms into Massachusetts”.

Evaluation results are not yet available, although gun homicide victimization among 14- to 24-year-olds in Boston is reported to have fallen by two-thirds since the project began. Because homicides were dropping nationwide among this age group during the project period, the evaluation will compare Boston’s homicide trends to trends in a sample of other cities.

More information regarding the Boston Gun Project is available on line at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov> and also on the U.S. Department of Justice website at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum>.

Project Exile

Project Exile was an expedited federal prosecutive effort by the United States Attorney’s Office, B.A.T.F., U.S. Marshal, and F.B.I., in coordination with the Richmond Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office, Richmond Police Department, and the Virginia State Police to remove armed criminals from Richmond streets. The project has expanded into Norfolk\ Newport News, VA, and Rochester, NY.

During the early 1990s gun violence plagued the city of Richmond, Virginia, and made it one of the worst five cities when it came to per capita murder rates. In 1997, before the implementation of the project, 140 people were murdered, 122 with firearms. The U.S. Attorney’s Office in Richmond developed and carried out an aggressive, innovative, and creative approach to reduce violence called Project Exile.

The project took advantage of stiffer bond rules and sentencing guidelines in federal court. All felons with guns, guns/drug cases, and gun/domestic violence cases in Richmond were federally prosecuted, without regard to numbers or quantities.

The project was fully integrated and coordinated with local police, state police, federal investigators (BATF/FBI), and local and federal prosecutors, to promptly arrest, incarcerate, detain without bond, prosecute and sentence violent criminals. In court, bond was routinely and successfully opposed, and prosecutors obtained mandatory minimum sentences. Project Exile quickly, efficiently, and successfully prosecuted a large number of gun crimes, with a significant long-term impact on criminal behavior.

Prosecuting violent criminals was one of the components of the initiative, but a major factor was a media outreach effort to get the message to criminals about the possession of illegal firearms. To effectively transmit this message a community coalition was built that consisted of business, community and church leaders. A media effort was created that sent the clear message: “An illegal gun will get you five years in federal prison.” This motto and the request for citizens to anonymously report illegal gun possession was placed on billboards, city buses, television commercials, and on over 15,000 business cards that were distributed on the street by local police. The outreach program was successful by increasing citizen reports about illegal gun possession and also energized the community to support police efforts.

The city of Richmond identified seven obstacles that were encountered during their implementation of Project Exile. Each obstacle was eventually overcome and lead to the realization of the initiative.

1. Obtaining the commitment of investigative agencies to bring the cases forward.
2. Coordinating with local police to insure immediate intake of cases from the street level.
3. Simplifying and streamlining the incident/case reporting system to bring charges quickly.
4. Avoiding “turf consciousness” among the various police and prosecutorial levels.
5. To ensure smooth operations there must be coordination between the court, U.S. Marshall, and prison personnel.

6. Establishing an active citizen organization to give support to the prosecution effort, primarily through creation and support of the media outreach effort.
7. Establishing a cooperative working relationship with the news media to insure that the cases are covered and word is further passed that the prosecution program is in effect.

Several innovative policing practices were formed during the 1990s, and it is believed that these practices assisted in producing fewer violent crimes in our major metropolitan cities. Project Exile was a new policing initiative that crafted a clear message and strict adherence to the federal gun laws. Richmond's firearm homicide rate steadily declined each year after the project was initiated.¹¹ Originators of the project insist that the positive gains made in Richmond can be duplicated in other cities. The key to the replication is having a city build a coalition with the will to implement the plan.

More information regarding Project Exile is available on the Virginians Against Handgun Violence website at: <http://www.vahv.org/Exile> or at: P.O. Box 271, Norfolk, Virginia 23242-0462; Phone: (757) 623-7918; Fax: (757) 622-3953; E-mail: info@vahv.org.

Chicago Gang Intervention Strategy

At the start of 2003, the citizens of Chicago were experiencing an escalation in narcotics-related gang homicides. Many of the criminal gangs in Chicago had become highly sophisticated and well-organized. The Mayor's Office and the Chicago Police Department realized that their response to gang activity had to counter the increased sophistication of the criminal gangs that they were confronting.

A key component of the city's new strategy to combat criminal gangs was the use of targeted enforcement strategies that deployed police officers to locations where gang crime was occurring. Chicago was able to move officers into locations where there was a high density of gang-related

crime by creating an intelligence center that would be able to predict where violent gang activities were more likely to occur next. The creation of the Deployment Operations Center (DOC) produced a unique blend of accountability and intelligence-led policing that produced substantial declines in the rate of violent crimes.

Weekly meetings are held at the DOC with the city's five Area Chiefs and their district Commanders. The predictive analysis, combined with street level gang intelligence that is provided by the Department's tactical response units, special operations, and area narcotics enforcement teams, provides District Commanders with the ability of directing effective deployment assignments to officers in the field.

The intervention strategy in Chicago is viewed as an effective way of staying one step ahead of criminal gangs and defuses their ability to buy and sell illegal drugs and commit acts of violence against members of the community. By the end of 2004, the city of Chicago experienced a twenty-five percent reduction in homicides, 1,100 fewer intentional shootings, and more than 10,000 guns were recovered in the city.¹²

Other Programs and Resources of Interest

National Youth Gang Center

The National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) is a valuable resource in supporting gang prevention and intervention programs. The center is located in Tallahassee and has been supporting practitioners, researchers, and policy makers, since 1995 with statistics, publications, training and technical assistance on youth gangs. Its goal is to deliver assistance that can be translated easily into policy and practice. The NYGC website features a great number of gang-specific publications that are fully downloadable, a database of gang legislation that is searchable by state or by topic and an interactive list called GANGINFO that provides practitioners with a forum for sharing ideas.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.iir.com/nygc>

Helping America's Youth

Helping America's Youth is a nationwide effort to raise awareness about the challenges facing our youth, and to motivate adults to connect with youth in three key areas: family, school, and the community. All of the youth-serving agencies in federal government worked together to establish a single set of criteria for rating the performance of youth-serving programs. The focus of this effort was on program designs that had demonstrated results through evaluation. More than 180 programs that address a wide range of risk factors were identified and have been included in a searchable database on the Community Guide to Helping America's Youth website.

For each program, the database includes information on the program design, the risk factors that are addressed, the target group, the evaluation design, outcomes, references for further information, and a point of contact. The database can be used to identify programs for potential replication. However, it can also be used as a point of comparison for existing local programs that are working to accomplish the same ends. The Helping America's Youth website can also be a good source for community leaders to search and locate federal resources already available in their neighborhood.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.helpingamericasyouth.gov>

Florida Safe and Drug Free Schools

Within the Florida Department of Education Office of Safe Schools, Safe & Drug Free Schools serves to promote and support safe learning environments by addressing issues of student safety and academic success on state, district, and school levels. Safe & Drug-Free Schools is a federally funded project through Title IV, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is a cornerstone of youth drug and violence prevention and intervention efforts within the State of Florida.

Through Safe & Drug-Free Schools, the Department of Education assists school districts in their substance abuse and violence prevention efforts by supporting school-related evidence-based programs and strategies. Safe & Drug-Free funds also support services and activities, such as K-12 science-validated prevention curricula, school climate approaches, conflict resolution, social skill development, student assistance programs, peer resistance training, parent programs, and peer mediation programs. The office trains teachers and other program implementers/coordinators throughout the state in drug and violence prevention science. The website contains information on evidence-based programs and practices, Florida best practices, and hot topics such as bullying prevention, internet safety, and social marketing. The website also includes an extensive list of links to other prevention resources.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.fldoe.org/safeschools/sdfs.asp>

The Search Institute

The Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. To accomplish this mission, the institute generates and communicates new knowledge, and brings together community, state, and national leaders.

At the heart of the institute's work is the framework of 40 Developmental Assets, which are positive experiences and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

The OSEP-funded National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports was established to address the behavioral and discipline systems needed for successful learning and social development of students. The Center provides capacity-building information and technical support about behavioral systems to assist states and districts in the design of effective schools.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>

Prevention Institute

Prevention Institute is a non-profit national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development

More information is available online at:
<http://www.preventioninstitute.org/home>

PeaceBuilders®

PeaceBuilders is the research-validated violence prevention youth program approved for the federally funded Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act. It is a comprehensive program launched in organizations that shifts the entire climate to a peaceful, productive and safe place for children, teenagers, parents, staff and faculty.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.peacebuilders.com>

Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy and Drug-Free

This site is provided by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administrations Family guide. It provides information and resources on such topics as:

- Talk with Your Child
- Get Involved
- Set Rules
- Be a Good Role Model
- Teach Kids to Choose Friends Wisely
- Monitor Your Child's Activities

More information is available online at:
<http://www.family.samhsa.gov/default.aspx>

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

A federal resource for communities working to prevent violence committed by and against young people. The mission of the NYVPRC is to provide key leaders in communities—city managers/leaders and community leaders—with dynamic resources to help support their efforts to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate effective youth violence prevention efforts.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/topics/school.asp>

Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training & the Southeastern Public Safety Institute of St. Petersburg College

The Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training (MCTFT) program provides unique tuition-free, courses covering all aspects of counterdrug law enforcement and training support for community anti-drug coalitions. The program is a federally funded partnership through the Department of Defense between the Florida National Guard and St. Petersburg College. The program is nationally responsive and is located at the South-

eastern Public Safety Institute (SEPSI) of St. Petersburg College. SEPSI is a state-of-the-art facility with a wide variety of special features to enhance in service training.

In addition to the MCTFT training, St. Petersburg College also offers a gang-related investigations program. St. Petersburg College is the first and only college in the nation to offer a gang-related investigations specialty track as part of the Public Safety Degree Program. Staff from the college conducted a national needs assessment to identify key course topics that would enable public safety professionals and students to understand and deal effectively with domestic and international criminal gang issues and investigations. These courses were designed and are taught by leading national experts in criminal gangs.

Eight courses were developed by St. Petersburg College's curriculum planners in response to a thorough review of existing literature and current research. These courses include: Introduction to Gangs and Crime, Intervention and Prosecution Techniques for Gangs, Gangs and Terrorism, Contemporary Topics in Gang Investigations, The Incarceration Connection, Central America Gang Assessment, Technology and Gang Intelligence Sharing, and Practicum. Additionally, there are five upper division gang classes under Gangs Enforcement Management to include: International Gang Awareness for Public Safety Administrators, Geographic Information Systems in Gang Enforcement, Forecasting Trends in Gang Enforcement, Political and Socio-Economic Impact of Gangs, and Management of Tactical Gang Units and High Risk Operations.

More information is available online at: <http://www.mctft.com> or <http://www.spcollege.edu>

Weed and Seed

Weed and Seed, a community-based strategy sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), aims to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country.

The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in 'weeding out' violent criminals and drug abusers and public agencies and community-based private organizations collaborate to 'seed' much-needed human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration programs.

A community-oriented policing component bridges the weeding and seeding elements. The strategy is a multi-level plan that includes four basic components: 1) law enforcement, 2) community policing, 3) prevention, intervention, and treatment, and 4) neighborhood restoration. Four fundamental principles underline the Weed and Seed strategy: collaboration, coordination, community participation, and leveraging of resources. More than 250 Weed and Seed sites exist, ranging in size from several neighborhood blocks to several square miles, with populations ranging from 3,000 to 50,000.

More information is available online at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome>

Florida Community Prevention Coalition Directory

Prevention is the linchpin of the strategy. To create a strong anti-gang prevention effort there needs to be wide-ranging support in the community to continually reinforce the message to our youth that gangs offer no viable future. Over the years Florida's prevention experts have attained substantial positive gains by developing the fortitude in our youth to reject tobacco and drug use. Prevention campaigns have developed highly effective messages to raise awareness and also educate youth, parent, teachers, and the community about the repercussions of many dangerous behaviors.

Building on the success Florida has attained in increasing the number of youth who reject tobacco and drug use as a legitimate way of life, the strategy will build upon the already strong prevention effort in the state. A good source of information on community prevention coalitions is the Florida

Office of Drug Control's Community Prevention Coalition Directory. The directory is located on the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association's website, and is a good first step for community's to assess and expand prevention efforts in their area to include gang reduction.

More information is available online at: http://www.fadaa.org/fcc/documents/Coalition_Directory.pdf

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), a research program of the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS) at the University of Colorado at Boulder, was founded in 1992 to provide informed assistance to groups committed to understanding and preventing violence, particularly adolescent violence. CSPV works from a multi-disciplinary platform on the subject of violence and facilitates the building of bridges between the research community and the practitioners and policy makers.

CSPV has a threefold mission. First, collect research literature and resources on the causes and prevention of violence, and provide direct information services to the public by offering topical searches on customized databases. Second, CSPV offers technical assistance for the evaluation and development of violence prevention programs. Third, CSPV maintains a basic research component through data analysis and other projects on the causes of violence and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs.

More information is available online at: <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/>

National Gang Intelligence Center

The National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) is a multi-agency effort that integrates the gang intelligence assets of federal, state, and local law enforcement entities. The mission of the NGIC is to support law enforcement agencies

through timely and accurate information sharing and tactical analysis of federal, state, and local law enforcement intelligence. The NGIC is focused on the growth, migration, criminal activity, and association of criminal gangs. Their intelligence assessments, intelligence bulletins, and joint agency intelligence products serve as a centralized intelligence resource for gang information and analytical support.

NGIC is staffed and supported by a number of partnering agencies including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Bureau of Prisons, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of State, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, National Drug Intelligence Center, and United States Marshals Service.

More information is available online at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ngic>

Florida Gang Investigators Association

The Florida Gang Investigators Association (FGIA) was formed in 1993 by criminal justice professionals who wanted to promote and facilitate the exchange of criminal gang intelligence and information among criminal justice professionals. The FGIA provides leadership in developing and recommending policies and strategies to prevent, control and eliminate gang crime, administer professional training, as well as assist criminal justice professionals and the public at large in identifying and tracking gangs, gang members and gang crime throughout Florida.

FGIA provides a professional organization for both employees serving within the criminal justice system, as well as the public at large that share a common goal of preventing, intervening, and suppressing gang activity throughout Florida. This mission is carried out by the organization through enhanced interagency intelligence exchange, legislative activism, citizen awareness,



innovative anti-gang awareness, operational tactics, and by providing professional education and training.

More information is available online at:
<http://www.fgia.com>

End Notes

¹ Howell, J. *Youth Gang: An Overview*. Juvenile Justice Bulletin August 1998

² Ibid.

³ Blum, R. *School Connectedness: Improving the Lives of Students*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health 2005

⁴ Modzeleski, William. US Department of Education: Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, American School Health Association 2003

⁵ Centers for Disease Control, *School Health Guidelines to Prevent Unintended Injuries and Violence*, 2001

⁶ Florida Department of Corrections, *2005-2006 Annual Report*

⁷ United States Conference of Mayors, *Gang Intervention & Gang Violence Prevention*, published 2006

Appendix A: Chapter 874 Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention

874.01. Short title

This chapter may be cited as the “Criminal Street Gang Prevention Act of 1996.”

874.02. Legislative findings and intent

- (1) The Legislature finds that it is the right of every person, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, or handicap, to be secure and protected from fear, intimidation, and physical harm caused by the activities of criminal street gangs and their members. It is not the intent of this chapter to interfere with the exercise of the constitutionally protected rights of freedom of expression and association. The Legislature recognizes the constitutional right of every citizen to harbor and express beliefs on any lawful subject whatsoever, to lawfully associate with others who share similar beliefs, to petition lawfully constituted authority for a redress of perceived grievances, and to participate in the electoral process.
- (2) The Legislature finds, however, that the state is facing a mounting crisis caused by criminal street gangs whose members threaten and terrorize peaceful citizens and commit a multitude of crimes. These criminal street gang activities, both individually and collectively, present a clear and present danger. The state has a compelling interest in preventing criminal street gang activity, and the Legislature finds that the provisions of this act are necessary to maintain the public order and safety.
- (3) It is the intent of the Legislature to eradicate the terror created by criminal street gangs and their members by providing enhanced penalties and by eliminating the patterns,

profits, proceeds, instrumentalities, and property facilitating criminal street gang activity, including criminal street gang recruitment.

874.03. Definitions

As used in this chapter:

- (1) “Criminal street gang” means a formal or informal ongoing organization, association, or group that has as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal or delinquent acts, and that consists of three or more persons who have a common name or common identifying signs, colors, or symbols and have two or more members who, individually or collectively, engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal street gang activity.
- (2) “Criminal street gang member” is a person who is a member of a criminal street gang as defined in subsection (1) and who meets two or more of the following criteria:
 - (a) Admits to criminal street gang membership.
 - (b) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by a parent or guardian.
 - (c) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by a documented reliable informant.
 - (d) Resides in or frequents a particular criminal street gang’s area and adopts their style of dress, their use of hand signs, or their tattoos, and associates with known criminal street gang members.
 - (e) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by an informant of previously untested reliability and such identification is corroborated by independent information.

- (f) Has been arrested more than once in the company of identified criminal street gang members for offenses which are consistent with usual criminal street gang activity.
 - (g) Is identified as a criminal street gang member by physical evidence such as photographs or other documentation.
 - (h) Has been stopped in the company of known criminal street gang members four or more times.
- (3) “Pattern of criminal street gang activity” means the commission or attempted commission of, or solicitation or conspiracy to commit, two or more felony or three or more misdemeanor offenses, or one felony and two misdemeanor offenses, or the comparable number of delinquent acts or violations of law which would be felonies or misdemeanors if committed by an adult, on separate occasions within a 3-year period.
- (4) For purposes of law enforcement identification and tracking only:
- (a) “Criminal street gang associate” means a person who:
 - 1. Admits to criminal street gang association; or
 - 2. Meets any single defining criterion for criminal street gang membership described in subsection (2).
 - (b) “Gang-related incident” means an incident that, upon investigation, meets any of the following conditions:
 - 1. The participants are identified as criminal street gang members or criminal street gang associates, acting, individually or collectively, to further any criminal purpose of the gang;
 - 2. A reliable informant identifies an incident as criminal street gang activity; or
 - 3. An informant of previously untested reliability identifies an incident as criminal street gang activity and it is corroborated by independent information.

874.04. Criminal street gang activity; enhanced penalties

Upon a finding by the court at sentencing that the defendant committed the charged offense for the purpose of benefiting, promoting, or furthering the interests of a criminal street gang, the penalty for any felony or misdemeanor, or any delinquent act or violation of law which would be a felony or misdemeanor if committed by an adult, may be enhanced. Each of the findings required as a basis for such sentence shall be found by a preponderance of the evidence. The enhancement will be as follows:

- (1) (a) A misdemeanor of the second degree may be punished as if it were a misdemeanor of the first degree.
 - (b) A misdemeanor of the first degree may be punished as if it were a felony of the third degree. For purposes of sentencing under chapter 921 and determining incentive gain-time eligibility under chapter 944, such offense is ranked in level 1 of the offense severity ranking chart. The criminal street gang multiplier in s. 921.0024 does not apply to misdemeanors enhanced under this paragraph.
- (2) (a) A felony of the third degree may be punished as if it were a felony of the second degree.
 - (b) A felony of the second degree may be punished as if it were a felony of the first degree.
 - (c) A felony of the first degree may be punished as if it were a life felony.

For purposes of sentencing under chapter 921 and determining incentive gain-time eligibility under chapter 944, such felony offense is ranked as provided in s. 921.0022 or s. 921.0023, and without regard to the penalty enhancement in this subsection. For purposes of this section, penalty enhancement affects the applicable statutory maximum penalty only.

874.05. Causing, encouraging, soliciting, or recruiting criminal street gang membership

- (1) A person who intentionally causes, encourages, solicits, or recruits another person to join a criminal street gang that requires as a condition of membership or continued membership the commission of any crime commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.
- (2) Upon a second or subsequent offense, the person commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

874.06. Civil cause of action

A person or organization establishing, by clear and convincing evidence, coercion, intimidation, threats, or other harm to that person or organization in violation of this chapter has a civil cause of action for treble damages, an injunction, or any other appropriate relief in law or equity. Upon prevailing, the plaintiff may recover reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

874.08. Profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities of criminal street gangs or criminal street gang recruitment; forfeiture

All profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities of criminal street gang activity and all property used or intended or attempted to be used to facilitate the criminal activity of any criminal street gang or of any criminal street gang member; and all profits, proceeds, and instrumentalities of criminal street gang recruitment and all property used or intended or attempted to be used to facilitate criminal street gang recruitment are subject to seizure and forfeiture under the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act, s. 932.704.

874.09. Crime data information

The Department of Law Enforcement may develop and manage a statewide criminal street gang database to facilitate the exchange of information pursuant to the intent and purpose of this chapter.

CS/CS/HB 43 – Criminal Activity/ Criminal Gangs: Effective October 1, 2008

During the 2008 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed CS/CS/HB 43- which will amend Chapter 874, Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention, (Appendix A), upon the signature of the Governor. HB 43 can be located at:

<http://www.flsenate.gov/data/session/2008/House/bills/billtext/pdf/h004305er.pdf>

Key provisions of the bill include:

1. Enhanced tools for law enforcement and prosecutors

Gang Kingpin Statute - Makes it a first degree felony punishable by Life for initiating, organizing, planning, financing, directing, managing, or supervising criminal gang-related activity

Important provision in dismantling gangs; this language mirrors the statute for an organizer dealing in stolen property.

Definitions for criminal gang members - The bill streamlines definition of criminal gang member and criminal gang-related activity in Ch. 874, Florida Statutes; leaves it up to a jury rather than a judge which conforms with recent US Supreme Court case law.

Prohibits use of electronic communications to further criminal interests of a gang - Updates our statutes to reflect new technology being utilized by gang members to recruit new members and facilitate gang activity

Prohibits the distribution of videos and still photos for the purpose of promoting a gang by showing illegal gang activity

Prohibits use of unlawfully issued identification for the purpose of benefiting, promoting, or furthering the interests of a criminal gang (3rd degree felony)

Adds gangs to jurisdiction of the Violent Crime Drug Control Council - Allows for law enforcement agencies to apply for additional funds for their long-term investigations into gang activities in their communities (no grant monies were provided in the 2008-2009 budget)

Makes it a third degree felony to intentionally cause, encourage, solicit or recruit a person to become a criminal gang member that requires as a condition of membership or continued membership the commission of any crime. Such offense is a second-degree felony if it is a second or subsequent offense.

RICO predicates - Adds new offenses to definition of RICO predicate incidents: Fleeing to elude; Accessory after the fact; Sexual battery (for gang “sex-ins”); Broadening the burglary from “smash and grab” to all burglaries under 810; Registration Violation; Criminal mischief (i.e., graffiti)

Florida Racketeering law has specifically identified street gangs as a racketeering enterprise for years, but many of the most commonly committed gang crimes are not current predicates.

Gang Felons in possession of firearms - Makes it a felony of the first degree punishable by life for a convicted felon 874 offender to be in possession of a firearm

Bullet-proof vest provision - Makes it a 3rd degree felony to possess a bullet-proof vest while engaging in a criminal act such as aggravated assault, robbery, kidnapping, criminal gang-related offenses and drug-trafficking offenses

II. Witness Protection

Witness Tampering - Strengthens witness protection laws by using the underlying criminal act as the starting benchmark for penalties for tampering and harassment.

Example: Defendant who is charged with strong-arm robbery, a second-degree felony, will now face a new second-degree felony for witness harassment or a new first-degree felony for witness tampering instead of current provisions of law which would provide only a third degree felony.

Pre-Trial Bond - Requires that gang members are held in custody until their first appearance the next morning to give the State an opportunity to argue for reasonable bond conditions to close the revolving door of pre-trial bond—which will provide additional protections for witnesses.

Example: DUI offender must remain in jail for 8 hours; domestic violence offender must be held until first appearance.

III. Law Enforcement Intelligence

Gang Registration - Requires adjudicated gang offenders to identify themselves as such when they register with law enforcement—failure to register is a 3rd degree felony

Assists with criminal intelligence; a law enforcement officer safety issue

Information sharing - Authorizes FDLE to notify law enforcement agencies that criminal gang member reports must be entered into statewide criminal database

Improves criminal intelligence capabilities for law enforcement

IV. Protecting Neighborhoods

Public Nuisance - Defines gangs or their members engaged in criminal gang activity to be a public nuisance and allows for civil injunctions to be sought to restrain nuisance behavior

Allows for arrests of individual violators who violate a court-ordered civil gang injunction (very similar to domestic violence injunctions that have existed for years)

Designates people at the place-- not the place itself ; similar provisions have been enacted and used effectively in California and Texas

Gang offenders - Prohibits probationers or community controllees who are gang members from

knowingly associating with other criminal gang members or criminal gang associates, except as authorized by law enforcement or prosecutors for the purpose of aiding in criminal gang investigations

Example: If you're a SUR-13 gang member on probation for auto-theft, you would be violating your probation to attend a SUR-13 gang meeting.

V. Other

Creates a coordinating council on gang reduction strategies within the Department of Legal Affairs.

Appendix B: First Interim Report of the Statewide Grand Jury on Criminal Gangs and Gang-Related Violence



**EIGHTEENTH STATEWIDE GRAND JURY
Case No. SC 07-1128**

**FIRST INTERIM REPORT OF THE STATEWIDE GRAND
JURY**

**CRIMINAL GANGS AND
GANG-RELATED VIOLENCE**

**December 2007
West Palm Beach, Florida**

Grand Jury Summary

We, the members of the Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury, find that gangs and gang violence are on the rise in Florida, as in many parts of the country. We see the increase not only in the rising number of gangs and their membership, but also in the number of violent crimes committed by gangs.

We also find that though some progress has been made, Florida's overall efforts have fallen short. This shortcoming is particularly striking in the lack of resources dedicated to law enforcement and prosecutors fighting gangs. In addition, we find that Florida's criminal laws must be revised and re-written to ensure the intent of the legislature can be carried out to "eradicate the terror created by criminal street gangs and their members."¹

As a result of our findings, we make several recommendations to address the most immediate issues: 1) strengthen our criminal statutes and eliminate loopholes, 2) make modest yet critical increases in funding to law enforcement investigators and prosecutors, and 3) increase communication and the sharing of information within the law enforcement community.

In addition to reviewing testimony for this Interim Report, we received testimony that provided the basis for us to return a True Bill for Racketeering and Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering against eleven defendants who are members of a gang based in Palm Beach County. The testimony about their gang reinforced the testimony we had previously received about the gang problem in Florida.

End Notes

¹ Section 874.02(3), Florida Statutes.

Recommendations

- I. Funding and commitments must be made for law enforcement and State Attorneys that allow for experienced and trained gang investigators and prosecutors who implement an investigator-prosecutor approach within dedicated gang units. Gang prosecutors, investigators, school resource officers, on-site school juvenile probation officers, and analysts must be funded in every circuit. Additionally, training and funding should be allocated to support the creation of specialized judicial divisions to focus on gang prosecutions much like specialized divisions have been created for domestic violence, juvenile and career criminals.
- II. Florida Statute Chapter 874 must be redrafted and modified in order for Prosecutors to enhance a defendant's sentence.
 - i. A "[c]riminal street gang member" under statute 874.03(2) must be redrafted so that it is more clear and usable by prosecutors. It is recommended that the statute be redrafted to state as follows:
 - (2) "Criminal street gang member" is a person who is a member of a criminal street gang as defined in subsection (1) and who meets two or more of the following criteria:
 - (a) Admits to gang membership.
 - (b) Is identified as a criminal gang member by parent or guardian.
 - (c) Is identified as a criminal gang member by a documented reliable informant.
 - (d) Adopts the style of dress of known criminal gang members.
 - (e) Adopts use of hand signs of known criminal gang members.
 - (f) Wears tattoos of known criminal gang members.
 - (g) Associates with known criminal gang members.
 - (h) Is identified as a criminal gang member by physical evidence.

- ii. Under chapter 874.03(2), a paragraph should be written which states that it is the intent of the legislature to allow a single piece of evidence or a single incident to prove more than one criteria.
 - iii. "Pattern of gang activity" is defined under statute 874.03(3) and is required under statute 874.03(1) in defining a "criminal street gang." Section 874.03(3) should be redrafted so that the definition of "pattern of gang activity" is less limiting and is not based on a defendant's prior convictions.
 - iv. Section 874.04 allows for enhanced penalties upon a finding that the defendant committed the charged offense "for the purpose of benefiting, promoting, or furthering the interests of a criminal street gang..." The legislature should clarify that proof of "benefiting, promoting, or furthering the interests of a criminal street gang" includes non-monetary benefits including but not limited to gaining credibility, status, or reputation.
 - v. Section 874.04 allows for the enhanced penalty provisions to be enhanced upon a finding by the court at sentencing once proven by a preponderance of the evidence. This appears to be unconstitutional as it would enhance the potential penalty beyond the statutory maximum without having the issue determined by a jury. Therefore, statute 874.04 must be reworded to require a jury finding of the enhanced penalty using the beyond a reasonable doubt standard.
- III. The legislature should create a provision under Ch. 874 which creates a criminal offense for Gang Injunction Violation.
- IV. The legislature should add a three year registry requirement for defendants who have been adjudicated as gang members under Ch. 874 and make failure to register by a convicted gang member a third degree felony. Registered gang members under this provision should not be published outside of law enforcement records. A convicted gang member under Ch. 874 will be required to have his or her driver's license indicate that he is a registered gang offender.
- V. Convicted gang members who are in possession of a firearm should receive an additional enhancement under Ch. 874.
- VI. Create additional qualifying predicate offenses under the RICO statute c. 895. Additional predicates should include:
- i. Fleeing and Eluding
 - ii. Criminal Mischief (including gang graffiti)
 - iii. Burglary – all sections
 - iv. Gang Injunction Violation
 - v. Failure to Register as Ch. 874 Offender
 - vi. Sexual Battery, Ch. 794, and Lewd & Lascivious crimes, Ch. 800, pursuant to gang initiation.
- VII. It should be clarified in statutes that juvenile adjudications of delinquency may serve as predicate offenses for a RICO charge.
- VIII. A gang kingpin provision should be created that mirrors the dealing in stolen property statute for anyone who "manages or directs" gang activity.
- IX. A defendant who commits a felony and qualifies under Ch. 874 who has three prior felonies on separate sentencing dates should be eligible to receive a more severe punishment as a repeat gang offender.
- X. Convicted felons who are prohibited from owning guns must also be prohibited from owning, possessing or using bullet proof vests.
- XI. The legislature should recommend that the Florida Bar Rules Committee and the Supreme Court consider the creation of a Rule of Criminal Procedure similar to Federal Rule 35(b) to allow for mitigated sentences beyond sixty days for gang members who cooperate with law enforcement against their fellow gang members.
- XII. Witness protection must be improved by creating a new bond structure for gang de-

defendants. If a judicial circuit has a standard bond schedule, the standard bond should be doubled for any offense committed by a gang member. A gang member who is out on bond should be prohibited from contact with known gang members or witnesses. Prior to a gang member's release on bond, the State should be given a mandatory opportunity to be heard at first appearance before the bond is set.

- XIII. Witness protection programs must be made more useful. Funding should be made available for witness protection in a manner that will encourage its use. A program through FDLE or State Attorney's Offices should be created that supports relocated witnesses with housing, jobs, and counseling. A victim/witness program should be created which allows a person to establish a new identity under special circumstances. Law enforcement must be made aware of all witness protection programs.
- XIV. Witness intimidation and tampering statutes must be strengthened in instances in which a defendant who is charged with an offense attempts to tamper with or intimidate a witness. The crime of witness intimidation or tampering should be the same felony offense level as the most serious underlying offense and one level higher on the severity ranking chart than the most serious underlying offense. The bond amount for witness intimidation or tampering should be higher than the bond amount for the underlying charge. A third party who is charged with witness tampering or intimidation should receive the bond amount, felony offense level, and severity ranking in the ease against the original defendant in cases where the bond amount, felony offense level, and severity ranking would be higher if this step-up were used.
- XV. Data collection and sharing must be improved across the State of Florida. A Gang Fusion Center should be created at an already existing law enforcement facility to gather, evaluate, and disseminate data

to the law enforcement on the street, adult and juvenile probation officers, and to prosecutors so that they may make real use of the information. The Center shall be staffed by state and federal agents from police, sheriffs, corrections, school resource officers, analysts and immigration agents. Data collection must be standardized and streamlined on a new FDLE Gang Form which is used by all law enforcement. InSite must be used and populated by all law enforcement. All departments seeking grant funding must be required to participate in InSite data program. Registration information for a convicted gang member must be collected. A defendant will be required to pay the fee for registration.

- XVI. The legislature should adopt laws to severely punish gang offenders who commit gun crimes. Convicted felons who are gang members and commit any gun crime should face lengthy prison terms.

Appendix C: 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment Recommendations

The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA) believes that implementation of the following recommendations will greatly enhance the ability of criminal justice professionals and communities to effectively address the gang problem together.

Federal Role in the Gang Problem

The gang problem is found throughout the United States, in communities large and small. There is a great need for a consistent and ongoing response to gangs at all levels, from the local to the state and federal levels. This response should be based upon best practices and should be flexible enough to deal with both rapidly changing trends and gang problems, which can vary greatly from one locality to another. Because gangs are a national problem, there is a need for a cohesive national response that supersedes agency boundaries.

Gang Denial

The education of the public, school administrators, community leaders, and law enforcement officials concerning the detrimental effects of gang denial is critical to controlling gang growth and its impact on the community. Public and institutional denial of the existence of gangs and a lack of proactive community measures are perhaps the greatest contributing factors in the alarming increase in the number, size, and strength of gangs. Denying the presence of gangs in a community significantly hampers effective prevention of gang growth and development during the early stages when violence is limited and active measures can effectively deter the problem.

Law Enforcement Intelligence Sharing

The sharing of gang intelligence is an issue of great concern throughout all levels of law enforcement. Usually, the most effective sharing of information takes place informally between individual law enforcement officers. The problems endemic in sharing information among the many federal law enforcement agencies exist to a large degree within some local law enforcement agencies. Gang, narcotics, homicide, and other units within municipal police departments must ensure that intelligence is communicated department-wide. In addition, law enforcement administrators need to recognize that the gang problem transcends geographic borders, making it essential that gang investigators meet regularly with their colleagues from other jurisdictions and receive advanced training at seminars. Because of the violent nature of gang members, both inside prisons and in communities, the sharing of information among criminal justice professionals has become an issue of public safety. NAGIA strongly recommends that all law enforcement agencies consider membership in their local RISS center to facilitate the sharing of gang-related intelligence through the RISS National Gang Database, conferences, and information sharing meetings.

Gang Definitions

There is a need for standardized definitions of a gang, gang member, and gang crime. If criminal justice professionals are to effectively work together and share gang-related intelligence across jurisdictions, it is imperative that they employ the same standards to determine what constitutes

a gang, gang member, and gang crime. Many states do not have a gang definition, either formal or commonly understood, among jurisdictions within that state. In fact, there are many different definitions among jurisdictions at the state and local levels, which make it difficult to have a common discussion on gang issues. The lack of a common definition also contributes to the complexity of quantifying the nature and extent of the gang problem. NAGIA representatives have developed a recommended definition of the term “gang” to facilitate a national discussion:

Gang: A group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that, if committed by an adult, would be a crime.

Uniform Crime Reporting of Gang Activity

In order to comprehend the scope and dimension of the gang problem and to accurately measure the effectiveness of anti-gang programs, there is a need for uniform crime reporting on gangs and gang activity. Accurate reporting is needed not only from municipal and county law enforcement agencies but also from schools. The standardization of gang definitions may help alleviate this problem. The FBI’s full implementation of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which collects information reported through the Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs), will also help in this endeavor.

Correctional Intelligence

There is a lack of intelligence coordination between police departments and corrections officials. This is largely due to the fact that many officers are unaware of the wealth of intelligence

related to gangs and gang members available within the corrections community. Corrections officials and databases within federal, state, and local prison systems are an unexploited source of vital intelligence. Many correctional facilities identify gang members, validate gang membership, and have the capability to monitor mail, telephone calls, and visits. NAGIA encourages police agencies to work cooperatively with corrections departments through partnerships involving information sharing, fugitive apprehension, and specialized enforcement.

Gang-Related Training

The explosion of gang activity in the United States has resulted in a tremendous increase in the availability of training about gangs. However, information presented at some of these training programs and conferences is outdated, inaccurate, or inappropriate for the local situation. NAGIA believes that there is a need to identify and support worthwhile training sessions, conferences, instructors, and events related to gang training. This endorsement will help to ensure that only accurate and up-to-date information is disseminated to criminal justice professionals and others who have a need for instruction.

Legislation

Increased awareness of gang activity has led to a proliferation of federal, state, and local gang-related laws with varying degrees of effectiveness. There is a need to identify and track legislation pertaining to gang prevention and suppression issues and to provide well-informed guidance to legislative sponsors. There is also a need to catalog and evaluate existing legislation to provide examples of beneficial statutes to those seeking to shape new legislation. The National Youth Gang Center maintains a comprehensive list of state and local gang legislation on its Web site at: <http://www.iir.com/nygc/maininfo.htm#Legislation>.

Gang Officers

Experience in working with gangs is important to law enforcement's success in their anti-gang strategies and goals. Many police departments have formed gang units and have developed specialized positions within these units. The ability of officers to effectively combat gangs is greatly enhanced by accumulated on-the-job experience. Many police officers and other law enforcement agents routinely rotate into other job assignments every few years, thereby diminishing the institutional knowledge of a particular unit. Expertise regarding gangs is particularly difficult to maintain because gangs on both local and national levels are unpredictable and readily adapt their methods of operation to changing circumstances. Therefore, it is critical that at least some of the personnel involved in gang enforcement have extensive experience working with gangs. NAGIA recommends that law enforcement agency administrators consider these factors when rotating or reassigning personnel from a gang unit.

Community Responses to Gangs

Law enforcement alone will never successfully eliminate the threat of gangs. Other community agencies and partners, including schools, juvenile justice agencies, grassroots community organizations, faith-based organizations, social services organizations, and others, must work together to address the problem of gangs in the local community and to provide youths with opportunities to opt out of the gang lifestyle. NAGIA strongly recommends that law enforcement agencies reach out to social service agencies, nonprofit community assistance agencies, faith-based groups, schools, and private businesses to promote a comprehensive and coordinated community action plan to deal with gang suppression, intervention, and prevention.

Appendix D: Florida Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys

Executive Summary

Black Males and Black-on-Black Crime: An Overview

For its inaugural report, the Florida Legislature charged the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys with investigating the factors causing the continuing crisis of Black-on-Black crime. This report is designed to address the statutory charge and provide a foundation upon which the Council and the Florida stakeholders can conduct future research and derive additional and more expansion recommendations for change.

Black-on-Black crime is an on-going crisis. Nearly 30 years ago, in August 1979, *Ebony* magazine published a special issue on “Black on Black Crime: The Causes, The Consequences and the Cures.” Publisher John H. Johnson asserted that the basic premise of the special issue was that Black-on-Black crime had reached such a critical level that it threatened the very existence of Blacks as a people. High rates of Black-on-Black homicide, unemployment, delinquency rates among Black youth, and disproportionate rates of adult incarceration and community unrest, led the publisher to remark that “as in the 19th century, there is no flesh in America, as Frederick Douglass said...as cheap as Black flesh.” Noting that the facts and figures cited in the article had nothing at all to do with the “social characteristics” of Black people who he argued have never been more criminal than other groups, Johnson argued that Blacks are simply more often exposed to environments that have produced higher levels of social frustration and social disorder in all groups. Johnson concluded by dedicating the special issue to what he described as the “overwhelming majority of Blacks, who are victims, not perpetrators of Black on Black Crime...and primarily to the perpetrators of crime whom he described as more often than

not, victims of their own crimes and of a society that condemns them to lives of frustration and rage and emptiness.”

Johnson’s appeal to the words of Frederick Douglass to clarify the relationship between Blackness and criminality, are important for understanding the context and implications of Black-on-Black crime, then and now. The intellectual debates and scholarly writings of Douglass and the noted social scholar and political historian W.E.B. Dubois are also frequently drawn upon to explain the relationship between Blackness and criminality, and the economic, social and political implications of “Black criminality.”

Murder may swagger, theft may rule and prostitution may flourish and the nation gives but spasmodic, intermittent and lukewarm attention. But let the murderer be Black or the thief brown or the violator of womanhood have a drop of Negro blood, and the righteousness of the indignation sweeps the world. Nor would this fact make the indignation less justifiable did not we all know that it was Blackness that was condemned and not crime. (W.E.B. Dubois)

Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society, is an organized conspiracy to oppress...and degrade [it], neither persons or property will ever be safe... (Frederick Douglass)

The research presented in this report highlights some of the issues that are conducive to alleviating Black-on-Black crime, and the recommendations made by the Council are designed to alleviate the frequency and intensity of Black-on-Black crime.

This report includes innovative and thoughtful findings from the Council’s five committees: Improving Economic Outcomes, Improving Educational Outcomes, Improving Foster Care and

Families, Improving Health Outcomes and Legislative Review. As a result of the Council's charge to investigate the factors "causing black-on-black crime from the perspective of public health related to mental health, other health issues, cultural disconnection, and cultural identity trauma," (Section 16.615(8)(b), Florida Statutes) the Council worked diligently to release the recommendations located throughout this report. As the committees addressed such varied topics, the best way to summarize all the findings was through the "Top 15 Recommendations" listed below.

Top 15 Council Recommendations

Economics

1. Analyze the participation rates of Black-owned firms and the dollar amounts awarded through bidding and/or direct contracting with state agencies. In conjunction with the Office of Supplier Diversity, identify those products and/or service codes where minority business enterprises, especially Black-owned firms, are under-represented. Inform the Black business community as to the product and/or service codes that are in need of more Black business participation.
2. In consultation with other entities such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and the Florida Minority Supplier Development Council, develop an assessment tool to identify business capacities, strengths and/or weaknesses. This assessment tool should be utilized to: a) Determine award capacity; b) Create business development programming for the contracted business; c) Project capacity increases during multi-year contracts, including potential renewals; and d) Identify a corporate industry peer success coach to be a resource to Black business participants.
3. Encourage and support opportunities for joint-ventures between and among Black-owned businesses, to increase contract performance capacities, shared costs and increased outcomes. Support community resources such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and Who's Who, developed by Pam and Jerome Hutchinson. Also, continue to work with the Office of Supplier Diversity, to continuously highlight and publish an online directory of all minority business enterprises including Black-owned businesses by product and service codes. Moreover, the Council will work to ensure the online business directory is accessible to all state and municipal purchasing entities as a resource.

Education

4. Review the statewide and district level policies, procedures and outcomes of school discipline throughout Florida. Require all public and charter schools to collect student disciplinary data, including teacher/SRO referral rates, suspension rates and grade distributions (along with rationale and outcomes) for all K-12 teachers and staff. Data must be disaggregated by race, gender, violation, and punishment. Create a reporting tool to track incidents and compare punishments. Require training of all principals, teachers and SRO officers on school disciplinary procedures.
5. The Department of Education, School Superintendents and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) staff should partner to evaluate, amend and/or rescind K-12 zero tolerance policies and practices to eliminate the referral of youth to DJJ for misdemeanor offenses.
6. Identify intervention programs with proven records of success working with Black Males, such as Role Models of Excellence. Beginning in 2008, establish 5,000 Role Models of Excellence programs in every county within the state with the goal of having a Role Models of Excellence Program in every school by 2012. Develop peer mentoring and other special intervention programs such as the Young Black Male Discovery Project programs for Black males in all elementary, middle and high schools.

Foster Care and Adoption

7. Require school districts to implement Kinship Care Support Programs. Non-relative care givers should receive cash benefits for caring for a dependent child. Encourage friends of parents or god parents to care for their loved ones.
8. Community based care (CBC) agencies serving foster youth should offer weekly Independent Living skills (IL) classes to all current and former foster youth age 13 to 23, as well as transportation for the youth to enable them to attend the classes. They should also offer weekly IL skills classes at all facilities to ensure that institutionalized youth receive the same training.
9. Promote adoption through “One Church, One Child” (OCOC). “One Church, One Child” of Florida needs to be restored to recruiting, preparing and approving families for children in foster care in need of adoption service. Appropriately and adequately funding OCOC will allow the agency to work along side the resolution of key barriers to placements of children, i.e. access to the children to know who they are and preparation of children for adoption.

Health

10. The state should invest in a public education campaign to promote the benefits of early screening for health care. This should include use of mass media, dissemination of information in public and private schools as well as non-traditional systems such as mobile medical units.

Legislative Review

11. Appropriate \$250,000 for the Council for fiscal year 2008-09, including the hiring of an Executive Director (FTE with full benefits).
12. Eliminate the Council’s sunset date by passing Senate Bill 546. The Council should also be made a permanent commission.
13. Establish at least one local Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys in each

of Florida’s sixty-seven counties, to serve as a network for communication, education and action.

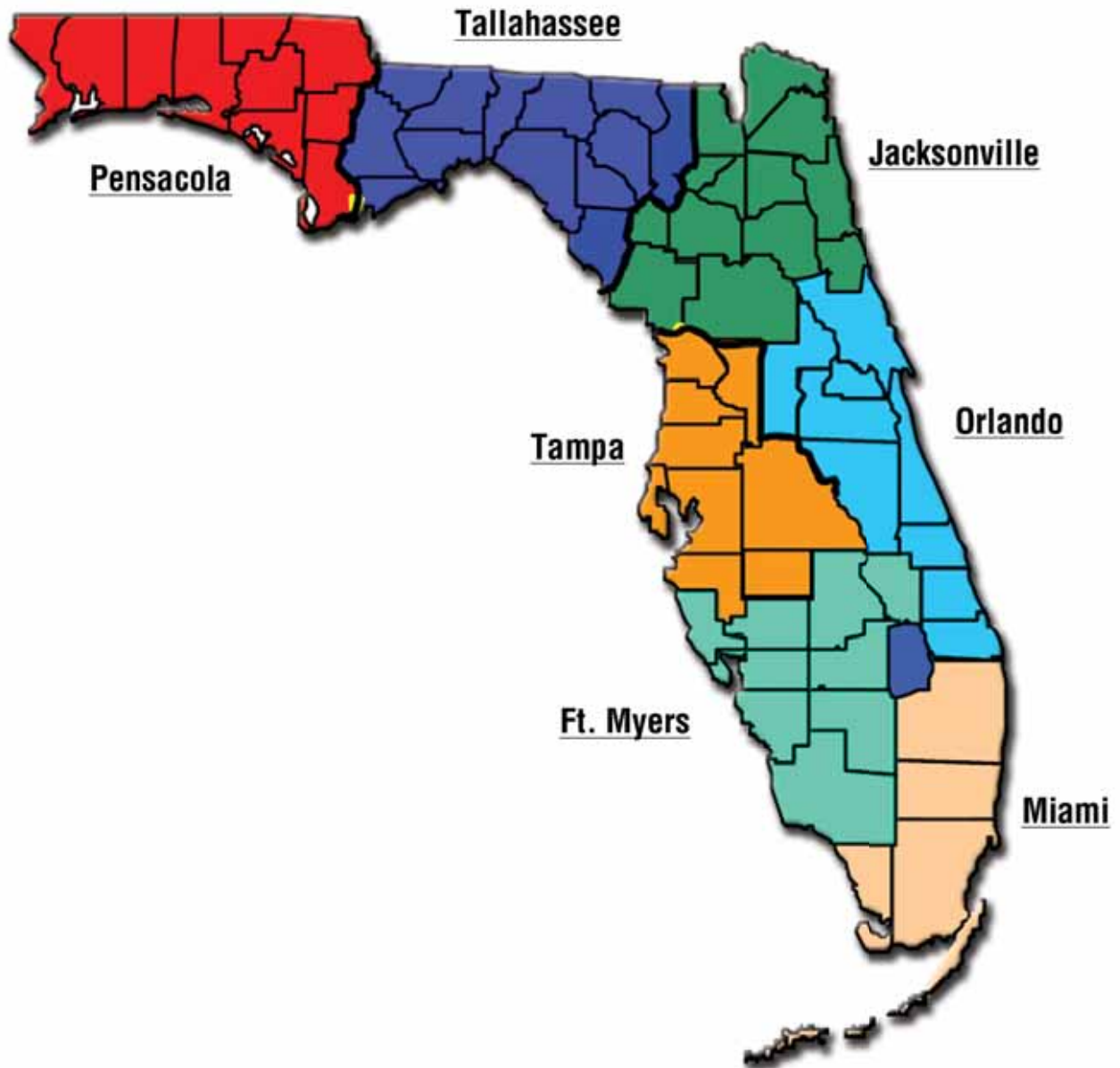
14. Reestablish the Governor’s Ex-Offender Task Force (Governor Bush’s original task force sunsetted in January 2007).
15. Support the study and recommendations of the Department of Juvenile Justice’s Blueprint Commission.

Recommendations

1. Florida’s state agencies should review and analyze the participation rates of Black-owned firms, including but not limited to the number of individual businesses and the dollar amounts awarded, of Black-owned firms which provide goods and/or services through any form of bidding and/or direct contracting.
2. Identify those product and/or service codes where Black-owned firms are under represented.
3. Create informational venues to educate the Black business community as to the product and/or service codes which are in need of more Black business participation.
4. Florida’s state agencies, in consultation with other entities such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council, should develop an assessment tool to identify business capacities, strength and/or weaknesses. This assessment tool should be utilized to: 1) Determine award capacity; 2) Create business developmental programming for the contracted business; 3) Project capacity increases during multi-year contracts, including potential renewals; and 4) Identify a corporate industry peer success coach to be a resource to Black business participants.
5. Florida’s community college and university systems should offer short-term entrepreneurship educational activities and/or courses to promote business ownership and offer educational programming in the areas of management, marketing/advertising, client develop-

- ment, governmental procurement, and other areas of best of practices.
6. Create more financial incentives from state and local governments for new businesses and expansion of current businesses for the small and disadvantaged businesses across the state.
 7. Encourage community development/re-development organizations to support mixed-use projects to provide affordable commercial space for new business growth and employment opportunities within Black communities across the state.
 8. State and municipal entities should encourage joint-venturing opportunities between Black-owned business to increase contract performance capacities, shared costs and increased outcomes in the Black community.
 9. State and municipal entities should conduct a historic review of their contracting policies, procedures and actual awards of contracts to determine the barriers to entry of Black-owned businesses and/or the most prevalent reasons why Black-owned businesses have not received bid awards and/or direct contracting opportunities.
 10. Support community resources such as the Florida Regional Minority Business Council and Who's Who, developed by Pam and Jerome Hutchinson, to highlight and publish a statewide periodical of Black-owned businesses by product and service codes. Distribute this contact periodical to all state and municipal purchasing entities as a resource.
 11. Florida should develop a comprehensive program designed to stem the tide of foreclosures within the Black community, which was more disparately impacted by unfair lending practices than any other ethnic community.
 12. Florida must work with municipalities and insurance vendors to aggressively and materially decrease the burdensome costs (taxes and insurance) associated with homeownership.
 13. Florida must increase the resources necessary to materially increase the educational outcomes of the Black community in parity with all other ethnic communities. (See also the recommendations of the Education Outcomes Committee)
 14. Florida must develop and implement strategic and tactical plans to increase the presence of high-wage employers within the state, while decreasing the exponential growth and perpetuation of low-wage jobs.
 15. The State, municipalities and Florida's business communities should look at greater economic opportunities for goods and services by and between Florida and the CARICOM.
 16. Develop an accountable matrix to monitor the success of municipal, state and/or federally funded programs in materially impacting the lives of participants economically, socially, educationally and with regards to health.

Appendix E: Regional Gang Reduction Task Forces



Notes

Notes

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