



EIGHTEENTH STATEWIDE GRAND JURY
Case No. SC 07-1128

THIRD INTERIM REPORT
OF THE STATEWIDE GRAND JURY

PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND
REHABILITATION RESPONSE TO
CRIMINAL GANGS

July 2008
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➤ **GRAND JURY SUMMARY**

We, the members of the Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury, find that gangs and gang violence must be addressed with prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation measures along with enforcement of the laws, punishment, and incarceration. While incarceration is appropriate when a gang member has taken criminal action, the State will be better served in the long term by preventing youth from entering gangs, providing intervention for those who have affiliated themselves with gangs, and rehabilitating gang members once they are criminally prosecuted and have completed their sentences.

It is evident to this Grand Jury that Florida must start today if it is to slow gang activity in the years ahead. The goal is to stop gang violence and growth and put the proper prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs in place. Only with a unified and forward looking approach can we protect Floridians from a plague of gang violence by ensuring the proper programs are in place in the every community throughout the State. Florida must take the lead or its communities will soon be overwhelmed with gangs and gang violence as has already happened in other communities across the country.

In addition to receiving testimony for this Third Interim Report, we received testimony that provided the basis for us to return four True Bills charging Racketeering, Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering, and numerous other charges against dozens of defendants who are members of different gangs operating throughout the State of Florida. The testimony we received about the gang members we indicted has strengthened our position that enforcement of the laws and incarceration alone, while crucial to the immediate protection of society, will not slow down the ever increasing population of gangs or the associated violence. Only through a

combined effort of enforcement, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation will we be able to stem the swelling tide of gang membership and violence.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

Having now reached the conclusion of its initial term, this Grand Jury issues its last report on gangs and gang violence in Florida. An Interim Report on this subject was issued in December of 2007 and focused on enforcement issues. This final report focuses on prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. For the purposes of this report, rehabilitation includes re-entry into society after release from incarceration. After listening to testimony for almost one year about gangs in Florida, it is apparent to this Grand Jury that gangs are a serious issue in our state that can no longer be ignored or minimized. The State of Florida must act now or find itself overwhelmed by gangs and related crime.

The State cannot build enough prisons to house all of the gang members who commit crimes; therefore, we must focus our immediate attention on prevention. At the same time, we should intervene on behalf of those gang members who have not yet become hardened criminals. Finally, we must rehabilitate those gang members who have become hardened criminals and teach them how to be productive citizens.

I. 2008 Gang Bill

On June 30, 2008, The Governor signed the 2008 Gang Bill, Florida Laws, Chapter No. 2008-238. We applaud the passage of the 2008 Gang Bill and want to commend the Florida Legislature and the sponsors of the bill. We are pleased to see many of the recommendations from our First Interim Report drafted into laws that provide law enforcement and prosecutors with the additional tools to investigate and prosecute gangs.

To be fully effective however, these new laws, which will take effect on October 1, 2008, require education and training for prosecutors and law enforcement. With the revisions to Chapter 874, prosecutors will be able to seek enhancements of gang offenders more successfully

if they are trained in how to use the newly enacted gang offender enhancement. In addition to Chapter 874, there were changes to the Racketeering (RICO) statute and other statutes designed to be tougher on criminals who commit crime as part of a gang related offense. Unless these changes are taught to law enforcement and prosecutors, we are concerned they will be under-utilized. Therefore, we find that the Office of Statewide Prosecution, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida Gang Investigator's Association, Florida Sheriff's Association, Florida Police Chief's Association, and State Attorney's Offices should take the lead in ensuring classes are taught across the State to explain the new gang law provisions and how they can be used.

II. A Unified Approach

We heard one consistent message from law enforcement and civilians over the past year: the State of Florida must develop a unified approach to address the problem of gangs. Repeatedly, we have heard that law enforcement cannot arrest its way out of the gang problem. A unified approach combining enforcement and suppression with prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation must be implemented *at the same time*. While the Legislature has taken an important step forward in our efforts to deter gangs by passing the 2008 Gang Bill, the next step requires prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation.

A unified approach will require funding from the Legislature even in times of economic hardship. It is evident that we must fund prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation if we are to stem the tide of the rising gang growth in the State of Florida. While state and federal funding is critical, cities, counties, school districts, private citizens, and businesses also must play a role. A unified approach means we all must do our part to fund local programs, speak out, volunteer, and educate. In addition, a unified approach involves changing societal perceptions about gangs and

gang culture so that joining a gang is seen as an unacceptable choice rather than the hip thing to do.

III. Long-term Goals

Gangs have a long history in our society and it may be unrealistic to believe that we can completely eliminate gangs from our communities. At the same time, it has been alarming to discover how rapidly gangs spread across our cities, counties, and state, putting a stranglehold on communities and overpowering law enforcement efforts. While there are many concerns vying for our attention today, we feel strongly that combating gangs should continue to be a top priority of the State of Florida. We must be vigilant in keeping the gang issue at the forefront even when communities, citizens, and the media may tire of hearing about it.

Vigilance is required because our gang problem will not be changed overnight. This effort will take an understanding and long-term commitment from cities, counties and the State. It will take time to establish an anti-gang policy in every region in the State of Florida. It will take time to put funding in place to establish and maintain effective programs and measures in every community. It will take time to evaluate the programs and determine whether or not they are working. The fight against gangs must take a long-term approach, fully funded and analyzed, or else it will be nothing more than a temporary fix at best. It must be a whole-hearted commitment to secure the future and well being of our communities and citizens from being at the mercy of the lawless.

➤ **FINDINGS**

The recommendations of this Statewide Grand Jury for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation strategies are based on the findings discussed in this section.

“Prevention” as used in this Report refers to programs, actions, and measures that attempt to prevent youth from joining gangs as well as efforts to interrupt gang formation.ⁱ

“Intervention” refers to programs, actions, and measures designed to reduce the criminal activities of gangs by coaxing away youth from gangs and reducing criminality among gang members.ⁱⁱ “Rehabilitation” refers to programs, actions, and measures designed to take a former gang member and help restore that person back into society through education and therapy.ⁱⁱⁱ

“Re-entry,” which is the process of placing a formerly incarcerated person back into society, is included in our discussion of rehabilitation.

Other reports and strategies in use include “suppression” as part of prevention and intervention. The term “suppression” indicates a combination of police, prosecution, and incarceration to deter the criminal activities of an entire gang, dissolve them, and remove individual gang members from them by means of prosecution and incarceration.^{iv} Please refer to our Interim Report for our recommendations and findings regarding “suppression” measures, which are a critical component in the unified approach to combating gangs.

While we will refer to a single gang member as “he” for ease of this report, we realize females are joining gangs at an increasing rate and the goals of prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation are the same for males and females. It is also necessary to clarify the terms “parents” and “schools.” “Parents” as used throughout this Report will include guardians, care givers, and family members. “Schools” as used throughout this Report refers to public and private schools.

I. PREVENTION

A. Understanding the Problem and Creating Awareness

Prevention must begin with education and understanding of the local gang problem. A prevention strategy cannot be successfully undertaken until the citizens of this State understand the dangers we are facing with our growing gang epidemic. Whether it is the community, elected officials, parents, teachers, or youth, a gang strategy will not be successfully developed until an understanding of the criminal gang problem occurs and awareness is created throughout the entire community. While it is obvious that parents are crucial in preventing children from joining gangs, parents alone cannot be responsible for prevention. We have heard that even with the increased attention given to the gang epidemic by the media, many people still do not understand the dangers of the gangster lifestyle and deny that a gang problem exists in their community or schools. We have heard that teachers, parents, and society do not speak with our youth about the dangers of joining a gang because they fail to understand the problem themselves. We as a society must become educated about the dangers of youth joining gangs because without the support of parents, teachers, and the community, children will continue to be vulnerable to the gangster lifestyle.

We have heard numerous reasons for why our youth join gangs, including the following: fulfilling needs caused by a dysfunctional family, finding social acceptance, lack of supervision by parents, lack of education, undeveloped job skills, need for protection, and desire to make money. Whether a child is raised by one parent, both parents, grandparent(s), relative(s), guardian(s), or family sibling, the caregiver shares in the responsibility for keeping a child out of the streets and away from gangs. For ease of terminology, we will refer to the caregiver as the “parents,” but realize many children are not raised by their biological parents. One of the more

difficult problems to solve is that children from dysfunctional families are more likely to become gang members. In a special report of the National Gang Crime Research Center,^v a study of family dysfunction and its impact on gang members concluded that the gang member who was seeking a better family life used the gang as an alternative to his family.^{vi} Furthermore, the report suggested that as a gang member's family environment becomes increasingly more dysfunctional, a gang member's threat of violence, commitment to gang life, and security risk inside the correctional climate also increases.^{vii} This increase can be explained because a child from a highly dysfunctional family is left with a void of normal human needs of attention, recognition, appreciation, and a sense of belonging, making the child more likely to seek to fulfill those needs by becoming a gang member. A gang member who gets his social and human needs fulfilled through a gang may exclude all other possible influences that could fulfill that person's social and human needs such as family, church, or community.^{viii} Thus, parents may be able to help prevent their child from joining a gang by providing attention, recognition, appreciation, and a sense of belonging to their child.

We find that both federal and state governments also have a role in creating awareness. Well-funded, aggressive ad campaigns have been run to prevent drug use, smoking, drinking and driving, domestic violence, and child abuse, to name a few. However, neither the federal government nor the State of Florida has an aggressive ad campaign against preventing youth from joining a gang.

We have heard about ways in which communities, schools, and law enforcement can create awareness by educating the public about the dangers of joining a gang. Communities are raising awareness by holding town hall meetings, going door to door, or creating coalitions and partnerships with law enforcement, schools, and churches. Law enforcement is creating

awareness by starting campaigns to educate the public and creating brochures about the dangers of gang life and the signs indicating a child may be involved in a gang. The Hialeah Police Department gang unit conducts gang awareness presentations in order to help at-risk youth and their parents learn the dangers of gang involvement.^{ix}

Law enforcement can also raise awareness among youth by speaking at schools and using programs such as G.R.E.A.T. to educate youth on the dangers of becoming involved in a gang. The G.R.E.A.T. program focuses on prevention of gang membership, youth violence, and delinquency by having trained law enforcement officers teach life skills to elementary and middle school students. Another program we have heard about is the Phoenix Gang Intervention and Prevention program. This program is designed to prevent and intervene in a youth's life by helping them identify and avoid the factors which lead to gang involvement.^x Schools can provide educational opportunities about gangs not only for students, but also for their teachers, administrators, and school resource officers. Training must include recognizing the signs of a student who may be involved in a gang. One city facing a gang problem decided to raise awareness by holding education and awareness workshops within the school districts to create a safe environment for learning.^{xi} We have also heard about programs in which clergy visit homes of families and help raise awareness.^{xii} It is the responsibility of the entire community to raise awareness, and it takes many different partners to get the message out.

B. Quality Early Education and Success in School

Efforts to prevent children from joining gangs cannot begin too early. It is estimated that over 13 million children under the age of six are in the care of someone other than their parents during the workday.^{xiii} Young children need quality child care that helps them develop their intellect and their ability to get along with others, learn to control impulsive behavior, have

compassion for others, and succeed in school.^{xiv} A child who is better able to learn, cope, and succeed will have less of a reason to join a gang. Thus, quality early childhood education and child care is a key component in our fight against gangs.

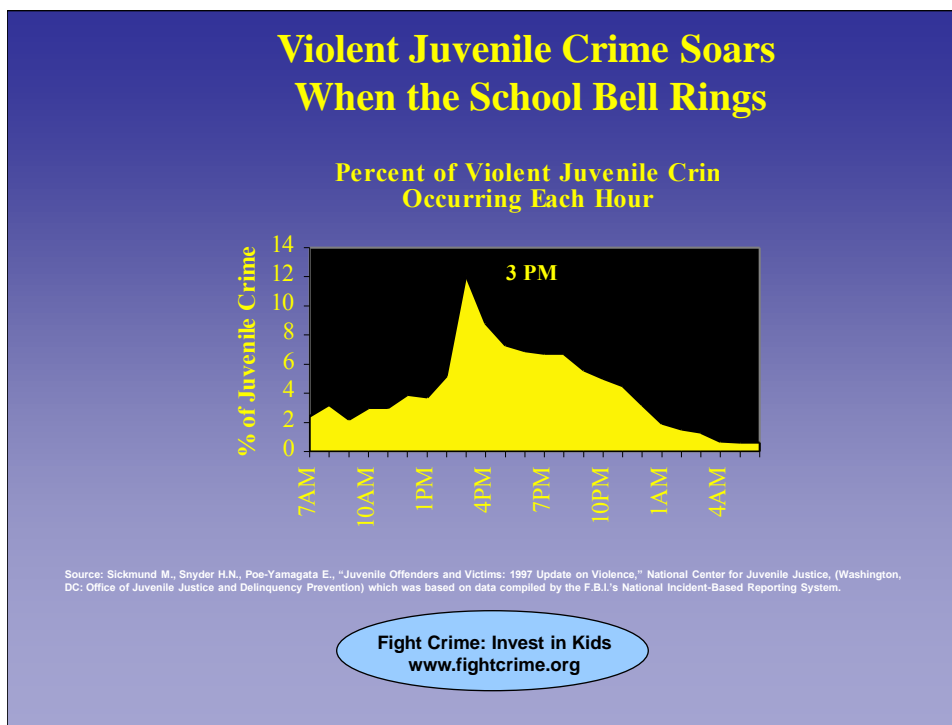
Quality early education can provide the foundation for continued success in school. Two major factors in youth joining gangs are lack of education and lack of employment. A youth who finds success in school is more likely to graduate high school and find employment or continue on to higher education. A youth who struggles in school may also face temporary or permanent expulsion. We have heard testimony that some school districts have eliminated schools specifically created for troubled youth (alternative schools) and often a youth who is expelled has nowhere to go other than the streets. Communities and schools have a vested interest in seeing that youth remain and succeed in school. Reducing drop-out, expulsion, and suspension rates is critical to our success in fighting gangs.

C. Keeping Youth Active and Supervised

It is estimated that one in four children in America is growing up in a single parent household and that half of all children will be in a single parent household for several years during their childhood.^{xv} In today's society, even if the child is living with both parents, it is more common than in the past for both parents to work one or more jobs. Living in a single parent household or a household where both parents work one or more jobs decreases the amount of time a parent can spend with his or her child and decreases the likelihood of adequate parental supervision. It is estimated that over 10 million children and teens, including 7 million children between five and fourteen years old, are unsupervised after school on a regular basis.^{xvi} It is common for a child to come home to an empty house with no parental supervision. Parents who are not at home are unable to supervise who their child is "hanging out" with and may not be

aware that their child is becoming involved in a gang. Limited time, ability, or finances are some of the reasons parents are unable to supervise their child.

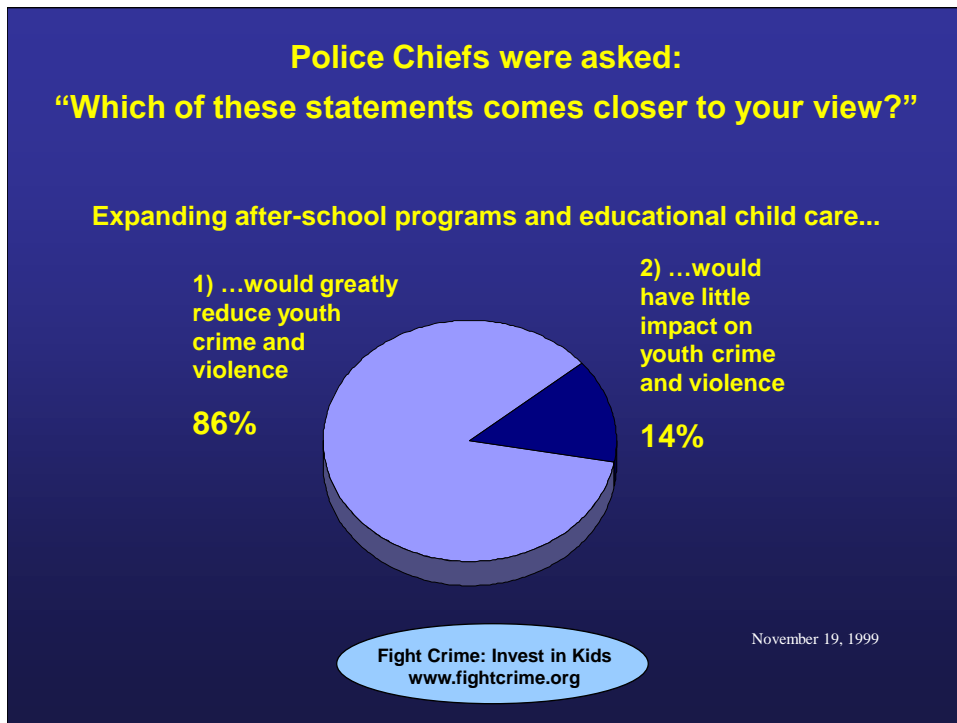
Afterschool programs or extracurricular activities must be provided for children who are unsupervised after school. Juvenile crime peaks between the hours of 3 to 6 p.m., the time period between when the school day ends and supervision returns. These are also the peak hours for violent juvenile crime (as depicted in the graph below), innocent kids to become victims of crime, 16-17 year olds to be involved in motor vehicle accidents, and kids to smoke, drink, or use drugs.^{xvii}



We cannot stress enough the importance of our finding that children need supervision after school, whether it is through afterschool programs, extracurricular activities, or by arranging time in the parent's schedule.

We have heard that it is vital to keep children active and in school in order to prevent them from joining gangs. Youth who are active in extracurricular activities such as sports are

less likely to have the time or need to be involved in a gang. As the following graph represents, a survey of police chiefs shows that almost 9 out of 10 police chiefs believe that expanding afterschool and child care programs would greatly reduce youth crime and violence.^{xviii}



Schools are receiving less funding, which will lead to fewer schools offering free afterschool programs. Parents who do not want their child left unattended after school will have to pay for an afterschool program if one is even available in their community. According to one study, afterschool programs may cost \$2,500 to \$4,000 a year, which is an insurmountable cost for many families, especially those living in high-crime areas where it is most critical to keep children supervised and active.^{xix} Communities, schools, the state, and the federal government must work together to find creative ways to fund afterschool programs in order to prevent children from joining gangs.

We have also heard that curfews may be beneficial in the struggle to prevent youth from joining gangs. Juveniles who are more likely to violate the curfew ordinances are more likely to

be involved in a gang.^{xx} Cities and parents can help keep youth off the streets by imposing a curfew or enforcing the local curfews which may be in place.

D. Change in Perception and Behavior

During testimony, we were shown numerous examples of how today's society and culture complicates our fight to keep children out of gangs. We have seen shoes with a hidden compartment for drugs or weapons. We have been told about clothing sold at large retailers that contain hidden gang signs. We have seen apparel that appears to be specifically marketed to a gang. For example, we have seen a hat that appeared to have the New York Yankee logo changed from their original colors of blue and white to yellow and black which are the colors of the Latin Kings. While some clothing has been or appears to have been specifically marketed to gang members, other clothing that was not designed to be marketed to gangs has been adopted by gang members. For example, a Chicago Bulls jersey with a specific number may be worn, not because the person likes the sports team or athlete associated with that number, but because the colors and the numbers represent a gang. We have seen examples of all sorts of apparel, especially sports apparel, where the colors, logos, or numbers have been adopted to represent a gang. Unless parents, teachers, law enforcement, or someone who could intervene has been educated on what to look for, they may not even realize a child is in a gang because the signs are difficult to decipher.

We have reviewed publications from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) stating that one of the most powerful influences on our children is television.^{xxi} According to a report by Kaiser Family Foundation, "American children and adolescents spend 22 to 28 hours per week viewing television, more than any other activity except sleeping."^{xxii} While children and adolescents are watching all of this television they are being exposed to high amounts of

violence. Even twelve years ago findings indicated that 57 percent of programs on television contained violence.^{xxiii} The National Television Violence Study links aggressive behavior to television shows which glamorize violence and desensitize viewers to brutality. Congress made specific findings about parental choice in television programming in Section 551 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Congress found that “[t]elevision influences children’s perception of the values and behavior that are common and acceptable in society,” and that “[s]tudies have shown that children exposed to violent video programming at a young age have a higher tendency for violent and aggressive behavior later in life than children not so exposed, and that children exposed to violent video programming are prone to assume that acts of violence are acceptable behavior.”^{xxiv} As part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress also created the V-Chip statute. The purpose behind the V-Chip was to allow parents the ability to screen what their children were able to watch on television. Congress required the V-Chip to be contained in all new television sets which would allow the user to program the television to block certain programming. The V-Chip can only be used if a television is equipped with the chip, the user elects to program the television, and the programs have a rating system encoded into them. While television programmers agreed to voluntarily rate their programs, the V-Chip has not been considered very useful in preventing children from violent television since 88 percent of parents in one survey stated they did not use a V-Chip or a cable blocking device.^{xxv}

Major medical associations have also released statements concluding that children who are exposed to violence in general, not just television, will suffer emotional desensitization towards violence in real life and will have a higher tendency for violent behavior in real life.^{xxvi}

We find the following statement by FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani on point:

“I challenge parents to take an interest in the programs their children are watching and talk about the content of the programs and commercials with their children.

Parents should also contact their local stations. Let them know what you like and don't like about their programming. I also challenge those in the entertainment industry – substantially reduce the violent content in programs that children watch and voluntarily include in violent programming the real consequences of violent acts and punishment for the perpetrator. Finally, I challenge each of us to speak out publicly and say that violence in programs that children watch will no longer be tolerated.^{»xxvii}

While we understand that violence in the media and television does not mean that it is always depicting gang violence, we find that violence still breeds violence. Prevention measures should include ways to address violence in the media and on television if parents, the community, or society wants to help limit the number of youth who join a gang and commit violent crimes.

Not only have we considered the violence on television, we have also seen and heard about games, movies, magazines, videos, and music filled with gangster violence and hype. Sometimes it is obvious even to an untrained eye that the content of the media represents gangster violence and hype. Often, however, the signs, pictures, or lyrics may be hidden from the average person. Thus, even parents who are trying to keep their child away from gangster violence and hype may not know that what their child is watching or listening to is actually gang related. With all of the mass media available today, it is a challenge for parents to supervise what their children are viewing and listening to on a daily basis. Far too often, parents simply cannot monitor their child's choices when it comes to television, magazines, movies, games, and music. It is even more difficult to keep tabs on what a child is accessing online.

While the gangster lifestyle is ubiquitous in the mass media, what happens at home is also a major factor in youth turning to gangs. Some parents lack the ability to handle daily tasks themselves, whether it is paying bills, balancing a checkbook, making appointments, or completing other daily tasks. Some parents may not be able to perform these functions because

of a drug or alcohol problem. Struggling to function in society, these parents are not able to help their children learn how to handle the typical demands of daily living.

We have also heard that children who join a gang are often “born into” the gang. It is not uncommon for children who are in a gang to have one or more parents, relatives, or siblings involved in a gang. We have seen numerous photos such as the one depicted below where a child is dressed up in the parent’s gang attire. A child who grows up in such an environment will face challenges in his life growing beyond the horrible example of this “parent.”



As mentioned earlier, children turn to gangs because they are lacking something in their home life. For this reason, a successful gang reduction strategy must involve efforts by the community and by parents to provide children with caring and responsible home environments from birth. We have heard that abuse and neglect lead to an increase in crime and that being abused as a child nearly doubles the rate of arrest for a violent crime by the age of 18.^{xxviii} It is estimated that 2.4 million children are abused and/or neglected each year.^{xxix} Parents who abuse and neglect their children are responsible for raising children who are more likely to commit

crime. Communities have an important role in providing support and education to parents in order to create households free of neglect and abuse.

II. INTERVENTION AND REHABILITATION

A. Outreach

Intervention is often the necessary step after prevention has failed and before rehabilitation can begin. It is the responsibility of the entire community to help parents identify and intervene when a child has started associating with a gang. A youth involved in a gang can be identified by a trained teacher, school resource officer, law enforcement officer, counselor, parent, or neighbor. Once a child has been identified as being involved in a gang, the goal is to intervene and pull the child away from the gang, which we have learned is often a difficult task due to the stranglehold the gang may have on the child. We have become acquainted with a variety of ways to accomplish this goal, including outreach programs designed to perform this function.

For example, we received testimony from a school resource officer who said that once he identifies students involved with a gang, he will go to the home of the student and speak with the parents. The purpose of the visit is to help the parents understand their child is in a gang and to give them information about rehabilitation services. According to the school resource officer's testimony, it is common for parents to deny that their child is in a gang until after the school resource officer has taken the parents through the child's room and shown the parents all of the signs that their child is involved with a gang. Most parents are shocked they did not recognize the signs, while other parents continue to deny their child is a gang member even after confronted with the evidence. In situations of ongoing denial, intervention may be needed not only for the youth but also for the parent.

Another scenario we heard about is when a parent wants intervention but does not know where to turn for help. We learned of outreach programs offered through community centers, counselors, churches, law enforcement, and government agencies designed to address intervention needs. While some parents and youth will seek out intervention, other parents and youth need intervention to come to them. Successful intervention efforts must be easily accessible and proactive in reaching out to find those who are not seeking help for themselves.

Gang experts who testified emphasized the need for local community centers to provide families, youth, and gang members with information on a wide range of issues they may be confronting. In most communities, someone in need must travel all over the county to find assistance with drug and alcohol treatment, anger management, parenting classes, and life skills. Furthermore, specialized intervention and rehabilitation assistance for gang members is not available in most communities. Currently, intervention and rehabilitation may require not only the desire for help but the dedication and means to travel to obtain it.

We received testimony that establishing prevention and intervention measures without rehabilitation leaves behind gang members embedded in the gangster lifestyle who cannot turn their lives around. While intervention can pull away those who have not become too deeply involved in gangs, rehabilitation is needed for gang members who have become hardened criminals. Effective rehabilitation for a gang member involves getting the gang member to commit to leaving the gang and gang lifestyle. Unless a gang member is fully committed, rehabilitation efforts will be a waste of time. It is likely gang members will require rehabilitation in more than one area of counseling since they have taken to a life of crime, violence, and drugs. According to testimony we heard, rehabilitation of a former gang member requires specialized counseling that includes but extends beyond anger management, life and job skills, and often

drug rehabilitation. Gang members have issues that other criminals may not face when trying to rehabilitate. Gang members may face threats, beatings, or shootings upon trying to leave the gang. They may have to reprogram the way they handle conflict, anger, hostility, or confrontation. They also need to remove all associations and identification such as tattoos. They may have to move from the neighborhood where the gang is located. Outreach programs must take a comprehensive approach to rehabilitation in order to be successful in helping former gang members fully shed their past lives and develop productive new ones.

We heard testimony that the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) requires that juveniles identified as gang members attend family therapy classes. Parents are encouraged to attend these sessions in which a counselor works with the child and family on specific issues that have been identified. Not surprisingly, we have heard parents often fail to attend these family sessions held by DJJ. Another outreach program DJJ is trying to utilize is the Phoenix program which we mentioned earlier. We have heard that DJJ is presently studying pilot versions of the Phoenix program and hopes to fund this program throughout all DJJ facilities in the future.

We understand that rehabilitation is a difficult process and will take time, patience, understanding, commitment, resources, and much effort; however, we have also heard of the long-term benefits rehabilitation can provide by turning gang members who were previously a drain on society into productive citizens who are assets to the community. Outreach programs have found that significant change in the gang member's lifestyle and/or the lifestyle that surrounds the gang member may be the only way to rehabilitate the gang member. We have heard that a rehabilitation program must first help the gang member identify the factors that pushed him or her into joining a gang. Outreach programs that take this step have a greater probability of success. Communities must determine how to provide intervention and

rehabilitation outreach in partnership with schools, parents, law enforcement, counselors, civic agencies, and clergy. Immediate and comprehensive action must take place or the gang problem will continue to proliferate.

B. Employment, Housing, and Services

We have received testimony about the challenges gang offenders face when they are released from prison and re-enter society. The primary difficulties are finding employment, housing, and services. Rehabilitation for a convicted felon who also happens to be a gang member is especially difficult. According to the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC), 35,377 prisoners were released from prison in fiscal year 2006-2007. The recommitment rate for a convicted felon is 33 percent within three years. Therefore, we can estimate that over 11,000 of those released in FY 2006-2007 will be recommitted to prison. Even more alarming is the recommitment rate for gang offenders, which is 42 percent within three years from release. Offenders placed on probation also have a high recidivism rate: 21 percent of offenders on probation are sentenced to prison within four years of being placed on probation. Equally concerning is the fact that, according to the DOC, the average gang member in prison has a seventh grade education level and almost 65 percent need substance abuse treatment. Rehabilitation of a gang member presents unique and difficult challenges that require specialized treatment and re-entry programs. The stakes are high: for every gang member who is not rehabilitated, the community and the State of Florida faces greater costs in future crime and incarceration.

It is well known that convicted felons already face an uphill battle finding gainful employment. We heard that this is especially true for gang members re-entering society because they often need more rehabilitation than other convicted felons. Gang members may have

visible gang tattoos, lack an understanding of appropriate behavior, exhibit anger control issues, come from dysfunctional families, have drug and alcohol problems, lack job skills, and have dropped out of school at an early age. In addition, gang members may be facing the reality that a legitimate job will earn them far less money than they were making on the streets selling drugs or committing crime.

According to testimony, employers cite the following reasons for not hiring convicted gang members: potential liability issues, lack of job skills and lack of education. In addition, employers are less likely to hire gang members because they often have a history of committing violent acts. We also heard that employers would be more willing to hire gang members if they were given some sort of incentive.

While the DOC testified about job skill programs offered in prison, namely PRIDE, we heard that these programs are available to only a very small percentage of the prisoners. Corrections Industries (PRIDE) is a program that allows inmates to receive job training and sell products to state agencies. PRIDE is the only program that allows an inmate to earn income while in prison. According to testimony, the benefits of earning an income include increasing self-esteem, developing job skills, and earning money that can be applied to paying off restitution, room and board, and for future re-entry or education expenses. Because PRIDE has already established business relationships, it has a high job placement rate for prisoners in the program upon release. While PRIDE is fully self-funded, we heard that the difficulty with expanding PRIDE is that it sells exclusively to state agencies. A similar federal PRIDE program exists but it allows goods manufactured by prisoners to be sold across state lines and thus expands the market beyond Florida state agencies. We heard this federal program has been successful in South Carolina but currently serves only 200 inmates in Florida. Other job skills

programs offered by DOC include vocational training in plumbing, carpentry, and cosmetology; however, just over one percent of the prison population receives any vocational opportunity at all.

Another challenge to employing gang offenders upon release is their low educational level. Prisoners could benefit from additional education while in prison, however, the average educational level of a prisoner is seventh grade. Only six percent of the prison population is eligible to enter an education program, because to qualify for a GED program, a person must have a ninth grade education level. This gap leaves many unable to enter the program even if openings are available. Therefore, most prisoners leave prison with the same minimal amount of education they brought with them.

Finding housing upon release is yet another challenge for prisoners, especially gang offenders. Many gang offenders cannot find affordable housing. When a gang offender lacks housing, he often takes to the streets and ends up turning to the gang to provide him with protection, money, and a place to stay. Gang offenders who return to their neighborhood most likely return to the same gang life they left behind when they went to prison. We heard that a gang offender is more likely to succeed if he relocates to avoid returning to his neighborhood where he faces not only his own gang but also his rival gangs.

We also heard that rehabilitation and re-entry has a greater chance if a gang offender is provided with services needed upon release from incarceration. A prisoner has many needs upon release besides employment and housing, including a driver's license, medications, clothing, substance abuse and mental health counseling, job training, social security benefits, and Medicaid benefits. Many of these services can be received upon release from incarceration if the prisoner has applied for the services, benefits, or privileges prior to release. We heard that

prisoners who do not acquire these services soon after release have a much harder time functioning in society because their long-term or daily needs are not being met.

Presently, DOC provides prisoners with a 100-hour transition training program. However, we heard this transition training program has not been updated due to funding issues. DOC offers re-entry seminars every month for prisoners who are to be released within the next six to twelve months. At these seminars, DOC officials go over the services available to prisoners upon release. However, because of lack of funding, DOC is unable to provide the direct assistance a prisoner needs to actually obtain the services upon release.

For example, a prisoner with a physical or mental condition needs medication upon his release. DOC provides a prisoner with enough medication for 30 days upon release. If the system functioned properly, a prisoner would typically qualify and receive Medicaid within thirty days of his release. Because a prisoner's Medicaid and other benefits are terminated upon conviction, a released prisoner must apply to begin receiving benefits again. However, in order to qualify for Medicaid, the prisoner is not allowed to apply earlier than six months prior to release. According to testimony, only 33 percent of DOC prisoners are approved for Medicaid when they first apply. The majority of applicants must apply for Medicaid benefits more than one time. This process is lengthy and requires assistance from DOC staff. A transition assistance specialist helps an inmate fill out such forms and apply for a driver's license, ensuring that the inmate has the services he or she needs upon release. While DOC has had transition assistance specialists who help inmates with their applications for benefits, these positions have been cut due to budgeting constraints.

Another service DOC provides prisoners upon release is a resource directory listing housing and other services in the area. However, we have heard the resource directory is not

updated often enough and does not specify who actually qualifies for the services and housing listed. DOC also provides virtual case managers to answer questions after an individual is released. However, we heard that the phone number is not a toll free number and since it is not a direct line, a person may be routed through several people before reaching a case manager.

DOC offers post-release programs that provide re-entry services, mentoring, or employment opportunities. According to testimony, some of these programs such as Operation New Hope have been successful. However, even the successful programs face funding problems, and Operation New Hope is set to be terminated within the next few years despite recommendations to expand the program. Federal re-entry programs, such as 2nd Chance Act, also exist; however, we heard that DOC has not yet qualified to receive this federal funding due to the requirements of the federal program.

Through testimony we received, it is evident that job training and re-entry services are severely lacking in the State of Florida. Without such services, gang offenders are essentially on their own to find employment and housing upon release. Prior to May of 2007, the DOC mission statement only included providing proper care and supervision of offenders under its jurisdiction. However, in May of 2007, DOC changed its mission statement to include assisting with re-entry into society. While DOC is striving to provide proper care and supervision of offenders under its jurisdiction, DOC cannot do more with less. We heard that since 2001, funding to DOC has been reduced in the areas of construction, supervision, and programs. From the testimony, it is apparent that DOC is attempting to make progress in the areas of providing re-entry services and programs; however, they will continue to fall short in these areas without adequate funding.

C. Tattoo Removal

In providing testimony, gang experts explained that tattoos are commonly used by gang members to show that they represent a gang. Tattoos, therefore, become an important avenue for intervention and rehabilitation of a child or young adult involved in a gang.

Some parents may first realize they need to intervene after learning their child has a gang affiliated tattoo. Other parents may already know their child is in a gang before they identify a gang tattoo. We have even heard the frightening reality that some parents have gang related tattoos themselves.

During testimony, we learned that there are gang members who want to have tattoos removed only to find the cost of tattoo removal prohibitively expensive. However, there are programs created to provide free tattoo removal for gang members. Such successful free tattoo removal programs have been established in other states with the assistance of state, local, and private funding. While Florida has managed to create a few tattoo removal programs, the programs are not widely available across the state. We learned of free tattoo removal programs that require gang members to sign a commitment to remain out of a gang and crime free for a certain period of time. Once the gang member has successfully completed the term, the gang member has his or her tattoo removed at no charge by a person trained in tattoo removal, usually a doctor or nurse.

We heard that in order for tattoo removal programs to be successful, they must be readily available throughout the state, have minimal requirements for the gang member, and allow trained professionals beyond just doctors and nurses to perform the tattoo removal. Programs with strict qualifications such as a long period of time until a tattoo can be removed have been under-utilized since few gang members can qualify. Tattoo removal programs also face the

problem of underfunding. Successful tattoo removal programs have received funding from the state, the community, or the doctors, nurses, or cosmetology schools that perform the tattoo removal.

A gang tattoo makes it difficult for a gang member to disassociate from the gang, avoid threats from rival gang members, and find employment. Tattoo removal programs represent a concrete step that can be taken in the rehabilitation process with a positive and lasting effect on the gang member attempting to change his or her life.

D. Graffiti Abatement

We have all seen the ugly signs of gang graffiti splattered across walls, buildings, homes, signs, and property across the State of Florida. The Interim Report discussed the need to address graffiti. Here we will discuss rehabilitation programs that serve not only to rid the community of graffiti but also to rehabilitate the gang offender who may be responsible for the graffiti.

Manatee County partnered with Amer-I-Can in a graffiti abatement program designed to rehabilitate a gang member while he or she serves probation. The Amer-I-Can program provides numerous services including training for law enforcement, youth programs designed at improving life skills, and pilot programs in schools.^{xxx} The graffiti abatement program requires gang members to paint over graffiti as part of their community service while on probation. If possible, the gang members are required to paint over graffiti in the very neighborhoods where they reside or placed graffiti in the first place. Often a gang member will have to paint over the very same graffiti that he painted. We have heard that requiring youth to paint over graffiti helps them develop an understanding of the impact graffiti has on the neighborhoods.

➤ CONCLUSION

While recognizing that family lifestyle is perhaps the most important factor in prevention, we urge cities, counties, schools, law enforcement, local communities, and society as a whole to pull together with assistance from the state and the federal government to address the growing gang problem. We heard that the most effective way to initially address the gang problem is to start at the community level. In order to determine how a community should address its gang problem, the community must first assess the reasons for their gang problem. Since no two communities are alike, each must determine what suppression, prevention, intervention, or rehabilitation programs will work best in their own community.

The good news for communities in Florida is that federal and state government offices have studied the gang crisis and formed recommendations to reduce gang-related crime and violence. The federal government recently released through the Office of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) a “comprehensive gang model” designed to help communities develop an anti-gang strategy specific to their community.^{xxxix} The State of Florida also recently released through the Office of the Attorney General the “Florida Gang Reduction Strategy 2008-2012.”^{xxxix} The development of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy was a collaborative effort led by the Office of the Attorney General in partnership with numerous state agencies. The Florida Gang Reduction Strategy directs communities to draw on resources from law enforcement, education, and intervention/prevention programs. We believe that cities, counties, and communities can pull from these resources in order to begin the process of developing and implementing a prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation strategy.

Research has shown that funding spent on prevention programs actually saves money for cities, counties, and the state by reducing crime and the cost associated with crime, prosecution,

and punishment.^{xxxiii} For example, we heard testimony about the Youth Violence Prevention Project in Palm Beach County, which is funded by the Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners. The project set up youth empowerment centers designed to provide both preventative and rehabilitative programs. The Florida State University College of Criminology conducted a funded evaluation process of this effort. Their evaluation concluded that although it cost Palm Beach County \$2 million to fund the program, the County saved over \$14 million during the first year of the program. The evaluation found that approximately 73 percent of a random sample of those who had entered the program had no new offenses and the crime rate in the area where the empowerment center is located decreased by 30 percent.

It is clear to this Grand Jury that by investing in prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs and measures, cities, counties, and the State of Florida will save money and the citizens will benefit with a decrease in crime. The challenge is to garner widespread support to make creating and funding these programs a top priority for communities. State and local elected officials must understand that an enforcement-only approach costs far more than adding funding for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation measures.

However, it is not enough to just fund local programs. There must be an understanding of the gang problem, dedicated counselors and outreach professionals, and a commitment by the community to solve the gang problem over time. We heard that some programs are initially funded but then never evaluated because while the programs seemed like a good idea, the community lacked the will to see them through to success. Communities must invest not only funding but also support, interest, and time to make sure that programs are fully implemented and evaluated. There are successful prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs that serve as models, and communities must educate themselves and determine what programs are

most appropriate for their specific needs and concerns. One approach for finding a model program is through the OJJDP comprehensive gang model. In addition, in accord with the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy, it is anticipated that regional task forces will take place across Florida whereby communities will be able to learn how to address their gang problem and begin developing their own comprehensive plans. While we have studied gangs and gang violence since September of 2007, this Grand Jury Report can only provide a partial analysis on how to address the massive problems our State faces in the escalation of gangs and gang violence. Whether a gang problem is being addressed by the community, state, or federal government, we conclude that it must be a unified approach with long-term goals which include enforcement, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. No matter how well intentioned a report, study, or plan is, words alone will not deter the growing gang problem; action must be taken now!

➤ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

“**Parents**” as used throughout the recommendations includes guardians, caregivers, and family members.

“**Schools**” as used throughout the recommendations refers to public and private schools.

I. Community and Society

- **In order for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation of gangs and gang members to make progress, communities and citizens should:**
 - Commit to an ad campaign regarding gang awareness;
 - Develop resource centers within each community so that a person or family may receive assistance through multiple programs at one location;
 - Let retailers know (by letter, boycotts, and peaceful demonstrations) that the selling of items that promote the gang lifestyle and violence is not acceptable;
 - Encourage the news media by sending letters, e-mails, and making phone calls to limit the violence and its glamorization in the news;
 - Have ex-gang members address young adults at schools, prisons, juvenile facilities, and churches about the dangers of joining a gang;
 - Demand that designated gang rehabilitation and re-entry programs be funded by the Legislature, counties, cities, and communities of the State of Florida;
 - Promote a local community telephone number to report graffiti and gang related activity;
 - Have key stakeholders, such as community leaders, prevention/intervention organizations, community program directors, the business community, law enforcement, and religious leaders participate in the regional task force meetings being held across the State as mentioned in the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy;
 - Enlist community support by establishing a fundraising board in every community to raise monies toward these efforts;
 - Establish community work and training programs to mentor and train youth in viable work skills.

II. State of Florida

- **We recommend that the State Legislature implement gang reduction policies and measures to:**
 - Adopt the Attorney General’s Florida Gang Reduction Strategy with a long-term goal of gang reduction, create a timeline for its implementation, and provide an analysis of the success of the programs within the strategy;
 - Explore the feasibility of tax incentives to private businesses who hire convicted felons;
 - Develop and fund a tattoo removal program which would allow youth and adults to have their gang affiliated tattoos removed for free;
 - Start an aggressive media ad campaign to discourage gang violence by our youth, educate the community about the dangers of gang membership, and encourage the community to get involved in taking action against gangs;
 - Utilize social networking sites such as MySpace or Facebook, in addition to other traditional media, to also promote the ad campaign to discourage gang violence;
 - Promote InSite for the collection and storage of data by law enforcement throughout the state, rather than the myriad of programs currently in use;
 - Increase funding for re-entry programs run through the Department of Corrections that help with job placement and other necessary tasks an inmate should accomplish before being released;
 - Provide renewed funding for Transition Assistance Specialists with the DOC;
 - Ensure every inmate who qualifies for Medicaid actually receives Medicaid upon release and replace the policy of termination of benefits with a policy that allows inmates to suspend their benefits while incarcerated;
 - Provide funding to expand prison programs that teach job skills such as P.R.I.D.E;
 - Adopt and help fund the recommendations of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy;

- Study the feasibility of having a full time director of gang control in the State of Florida;
 - Fund the Phoenix program throughout the State through the appropriate agencies;
 - Fund school readiness programs which provide educational child care and parental coaching;
 - Provide adequate funding so that schools can offer afterschool programs, extracurricular activities, and alternative schools;
 - Emphasize that the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy is a long-term commitment and that the capital it takes to start a program will be repaid to the State through lower crime rates and prison statistics.
- **The Office of the Attorney General must provide leadership in developing prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation strategies. It should:**
 - Ensure that the recently released Florida Gang Reduction Strategy is implemented, that the seven regional task forces are held, and that every task force develop a plan of action to accomplish their regional gang reduction strategy;
 - Establish a fundraising board in every region;
 - Initiate an anti-gang campaign program that can be taught in the schools similar to the cyber-crime program led by the Attorney General.

III. Counties and Cities

- **The role of cities and counties in prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation of gang members should include goals to:**
 - Develop an educational program on gangs that reaches the entire community (not only affected neighborhoods);
 - Develop a comprehensive plan for local gang reduction based on input from citizens as well as offices and agencies already working on gang reduction strategies;
 - Develop a timeline for implementation of a local gang reduction plan and create a review process to measure the success of the programs;
 - Create long-term goals for a local gang reduction plan which includes long-range funding;

- Make a coordinated effort with law enforcement and school districts to obtain grants that address gang-related issues from different federal and state agencies as well as private foundations (such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers from the U.S. Department of Education);
- Participate in the regional gang task forces to be held across the State, as well as any periodic gang summits;
- Promote a local phone number and internet site to report graffiti and gang activity that is monitored by law enforcement and community leaders to help keep everyone informed about the status of gang activity in the community.

IV. Schools and Education

- **Schools and education have the potential to make a tremendous difference in preventing our youth from joining gangs. Schools should:**
 - Offer afterschool programs and activities as well as summer camps at all schools (K-12) in order to encourage children to remain involved in school activities and away from gangs;
 - Develop a wide range of extracurricular activities and programs so that children are able to find a program or activity that suits their individual interests;
 - Develop K-12 training programs and require teachers and school resource officers to receive training in gang recognition, prevention, and intervention;
 - Offer parents an orientation at school or online about the warning signs that their child might be associating with a gang;
 - Offer information, support, and programs for parents of youth who are identified as gang members at the elementary, middle, and high schools;
 - Provide brochures to youth and parents that describe local community programs that serve students (K-12);
 - Consider creative ways to provide financial support, such as fundraisers and private business sponsorship, for afterschool programs, summer camps, extracurricular activities, and electives;
 - Seek alternatives to expulsion and out of school suspension such as alternative schools in order to prevent disciplined students from spending

time unsupervised during the day, making them more susceptible to joining a gang;

- Lead districtwide and schoolwide anti-violence campaigns, including pledges for parents and students to keep out of gangs;
- See that programs are taught in schools that help youth with conflict resolution and life skills, such as G.R.E.A.T., the Phoenix program, or other similar programs;
- Include a course of study in gangs and prevention at colleges and consider whether a degree could be offered in the study of gangs, similar to St. Petersburg College's "Gang-related Investigations Specialty Track, Criminal Justice Technology, Associate in Science Degree;"
- Have the Department of Education, along with local school administrators and school board members, participate in the regional task forces which are being held across the State and offer continuing education credits;
- Enforce a school dress code at the elementary, middle, and high school levels that prohibits students from wearing apparel with gang symbols or gang associations.

V. Parents and Families

- **Parents have a critical role in preventing their child from entering a gang and can help reduce the likelihood their child will enter a gang. Parents should:**
 - Spend as much time as possible with their child and become involved in his or her daily life;
 - Instill positive values and morals in their child and lead by example;
 - Talk to their child about the long-term effects of joining a gang and discourage their child from gang affiliation;
 - Supervise who their child is associating with to ensure that their child is not becoming involved with a gang;
 - Familiarize themselves with and become active in local community programs;
 - Seek help when needed and consider enrollment in classes or programs for self-improvement and support in areas such as parenting, anger

management, drug and alcohol abuse, and life skills (including enrollment in classes and programs for their child as appropriate);

- Make sure their child attends school, attend parent-teacher meetings, volunteer at school, and encourage their child to be involved in extracurricular school activities;
 - Ensure their child is involved with an afterschool activity, whether through the school or through a community center, so that their child is not hanging out with a gang;
 - Request that schools provide a diverse range of electives and extracurricular activities to interest students;
 - Monitor what their child is viewing on television and on the internet and establish time frames for how long a child is allowed to do those activities;
 - Discourage their child from watching or using media that depicts or glamorizes gang violence, including movies, television, music, and video games that show gang violence or glamorize the gangster lifestyle;
 - Hold and attend town hall meetings that address community and gang related issues;
 - Be aware that news coverage may glamorize violence for their child and as such, a child's exposure to television news and print media should be limited;
 - Ensure their child receives quality child care that helps him or her grow intellectually and teaches the child how to act appropriately in society;
 - Establish and carry out a consistent discipline plan for their child with clear expectations and consequences;
 - Identify as soon as possible and seek help early if their child has a learning disability, which may make life at school and at home more challenging for both the child and parent.
- **Parents must educate themselves about the warning signs of gang membership and be able to recognize when their child has begun affiliating with a gang. Once parents realize their child is involved in a gang, parents must intervene and begin the process of rehabilitation. We recommend that parents:**
- Take an active role in their child's life, seek help in the community, and find programs that serve themselves and their child;

- Learn to recognize signs of gang affiliation, such as gang tattoos, which may be identified by asking the child, photographing and asking the police, or searching on the internet;
- Discourage gang affiliated tattoos, encourage their child to remove any gang affiliated tattoos from his or her body, and remove any gang tattoos the parent may have;
- Attend all family therapy sessions offered by Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) if their child is a juvenile offender.

VI. Law Enforcement

- **While enforcement of laws against gangs and gang members will be essential in the fight against gangs, law enforcement must also work on prevention and intervention. Law enforcement must:**
 - Develop and receive training that uses a multi-faceted approach to curb gang violence that extends beyond gang identification and arrests;
 - Participate in the sharing of information with the community on suppression, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs;
 - Participate in the regional task forces being held across the State of Florida;
 - Support FDLE in the creation of a statewide databank to house all of the prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs throughout the State of Florida;
 - Require FDLE to use one database within its own agency for the collection and storage of information.
- **The Florida Department of Corrections can provide intervention and rehabilitation measures for gang members. We recommend that DOC:**
 - Continue to develop and expand rehabilitation and re-entry programs which are specifically designed for incarcerated gang offenders or those on supervised probation;
 - Develop a tattoo removal program that allows gang offenders who are incarcerated or on supervision the opportunity to have a gang-related tattoo removed for free;

- Expand the federal re-entry grant programs that are presently in existence to serve more gang offenders in more locations;
 - Utilize successful programs such as Operation New Hope and expand similar programs;
 - Collaborate with other community resources to establish community work programs for youth;
 - Establish Transition Assistance Specialists at every facility and restore funding for any Transition Assistance Specialists positions that have been eliminated;
 - Develop and implement more job skills programs such as the P.R.I.D.E. program so that more prisoners have a chance to learn job skills prior to release;
 - Offer prisoners educational programs so they may qualify for GED programs which are readily available to inmates while incarcerated.
- **The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice can provide additional intervention and rehabilitation measures to Florida's troubled youth involved in gangs. We recommend that DJJ:**
- Establish residential programs that specifically address rehabilitation of gang members back into society;
 - Require all youth identified with a gang to enter a local graffiti abatement program while on probation, and to the extent available, require youth to complete community service in the neighborhoods where the criminal acts took place;
 - Provide juveniles and their parents with a written list of all local programs that address prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation of gang members, including the name, location, and phone number of each program, as well as contact information for the resource center available in the community;
 - Implement a rehabilitation program such as the Phoenix program throughout the State in residential programs for gang members;
 - Establish relations with re-entry programs such as the Panzou Project which help juveniles develop the skills necessary to re-enter society;
 - Develop a tattoo removal program that allows DJJ to provide juveniles and their parents information about doctors who are available to remove any gang tattoos without charge;

- Designate and train gang intervention specialists and gang intervention teams that focus on keeping youth active and out of gangs;
- Mandate parents' participation in family therapy for first-time offenders of a gang-related offense.

VII. Federal Responsibility

- **The U.S. Congress can also contribute to the prevention, intervention and rehabilitation of gang members. Congress must:**
 - Develop and pursue an international policy on combating gangs and assist foreign countries with their gang problems so that they do not spread into the United States;
 - Provide long-term funding to federal grants for gang prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation programs;
 - Evaluate and implement ways to boost job opportunities for convicted felons upon release, such as tax incentives or deductions for businesses that provide jobs to convicted felons;
 - Take the lead to create a national ad campaign to discourage gang violence and gang membership;
 - Address the lack of gang-related data sharing throughout the United States and establish a national database through which city, county, state, and federal agencies input and share information;
 - Designate a person within the Office of Drug Control or other appropriate agency who would be responsible for gathering information regarding gang control strategies, programs, and available funding to report to the legislative and executive branches;
 - Increase funding for educational grants, such as Head Start and other successful youth and community based programs;
 - Provide funding for new or previously existing federal block grants for juvenile justice programs.

VIII. Private Businesses

- **Private businesses can aid in the prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation of gang members. We recommend that businesses:**
 - Make efforts to hire juvenile and adult criminal gang offenders when appropriate;
 - Have doctors, medical schools, and cosmetology schools volunteer to remove tattoos for free from individuals who enter into an agreement to disassociate from a gang;
 - Provide funding for local afterschool programs and electives;
 - Collaborate with communities affected by gangs and gang violence, attend community meetings, and volunteer with local programs that work to combat gang membership and gang violence;
 - Ensure graffiti is removed immediately from their property;
 - Refuse to hire known gang members to promote items sold by their businesses;
 - Raise money and participate in the regional fundraising boards that support efforts to reduce gangs and gang violence.

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- ⁱ Adopted from *Youth Gang Programs and Strategies*, James Howell, National Youth Gang Center, pg. 5, August 2000.
- ⁱⁱ *Id.* at 14.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Adopted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College Edition.
- ^{iv} *Youth Gang Programs and Strategies*, at 21.
- ^v *THE FACTS ABOUT GANG LIFE IN AMERICA TODAY: A NATIONAL STUDY OF OVER 4,000 GANG MEMBERS*, a special report of the National Gang Crime research Center, 1997.
- ^{vi} *Id.*
- ^{vii} *Id.* at Chapter 8, Summary and Conclusion.
- ^{viii} *Id.*
- ^{ix} *BEST PRACTICES of COMMUNITY POLICING IN: GANG INTERVENTION & GANG VIOLENCE PREVENTION 2006*, The United States Conference of Mayors: Best Practices Center, pg. 45.
- ^x See also *Florida Gang Reduction Strategy 2008-2012*, Office of the Attorney General, released June 2008, for further description of the G.R.E.A.T., Phoenix, and other programs available, beginning on pg 41.
- ^{xi} *BEST PRACTICES of COMMUNITY POLICING IN: GANG INTERVENTION & GANG VIOLENCE PREVENTION 2006*, at pg. 6.
- ^{xii} *Id.* at pg. 21.
- ^{xiii} *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, PowerPoint materials from website.
- ^{xiv} *Id.*
- ^{xv} *Id.*
- ^{xvi} *Id.*
- ^{xvii} *Id.*
- ^{xviii} *Id.*
- ^{xix} *Id.*
- ^{xx} *BEST PRACTICES of COMMUNITY POLICING IN: GANG INTERVENTION & GANG VIOLENCE PREVENTION 2006*, at pg. 5.
- ^{xxi} *Remarks of Commissioner Susan Ness Before the Oklahoma Broadcasters Association*, February 16, 1996.
- ^{xxii} Quoted from *Remarks of FCC Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate to National Religious Broadcasters Annual Convention*, March 10, 2008.
- ^{xxiii} See *Remarks of Commissioner Susan Ness*.
- ^{xxiv} Communications Act of 1934 as amended by The Telecommunications Act of 1996, Section 551.
- ^{xxv} *Statement of Chairman Kevin J. Martin*, RE: In the Matter of Violent Television Programming and Its Impact On Children, MB Docket No. 04-261, quoting a Zogby poll.
- ^{xxvi} *Id.*, quoting a statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Medical Association, and the American Psychiatric Association, July 2000.
- ^{xxvii} Speech by FCC Commissioner Gloria Tristani to the Puerto Rican Congress on Television Violence, February 11, 1998, and reprinted in a FCC news release *Commissioner Tristani Challenges Parents, Industry, Society to Protect Children from Harmful TV Violence*.
- ^{xxviii} Widom, C.S., *Avoidance of Criminality in Abused and Neglected Children*, *Psychiatry*, v. 54, 1991; See Also *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, PowerPoint materials from website.
- ^{xxix} *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, PowerPoint materials from website.
- ^{xxx} For more information visit www.amer-i-can.org; see also *Florida Gang Reduction Strategy*, pg 46.
- ^{xxxi} *Best Practices To Address Community Gang Problems*, Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, released 2008. See Appendix A.
- ^{xxxii} *Florida Gang Reduction Strategy*.
- ^{xxxiii} See *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, PowerPoint materials and other information from website.

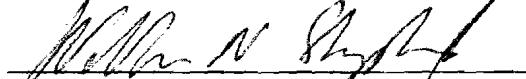
➤ **CERTIFICATION OF REPORT**

THIS REPORT IS RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED in Open Court to the Honorable Kathleen Kroll, Presiding Judge of the Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury, this 17 day of July, 2008.



Juror #110
Foreperson
Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida

I, WILLIAM N. SHEPHERD, Statewide Prosecutor and Legal Adviser, Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 17 day of July, 2008.



WILLIAM N. SHEPHERD
Statewide Prosecutor
Legal Adviser

I, OSCAR GELPI, Special Counsel and Assistant Legal Adviser, Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 17 day of July, 2008.



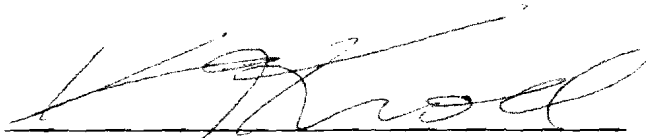
OSCAR GELPI
Special Counsel
Assistant Legal Adviser

I, MICHAEL W. SCHMID, Assistant Statewide Prosecutor and Assistant Legal Adviser, Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida, hereby certify that I, as authorized and required by law, have advised the Grand Jury which returned this report on this 17th day of July, 2008.



MICHAEL W. SCHMID
Assistant Statewide Prosecutor
Assistant Legal Adviser

17th THE FOREGOING Interim Report was returned before me in Open Court this day of July, 2008, and is hereby sealed until further order of this Court, upon proper motion of the Statewide Prosecutor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kroll', written over a horizontal line.

HONORABLE KATHLEEN KROLL
Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit
Presiding Judge
Eighteenth Statewide Grand Jury of Florida

➤ **APPENDIX A**

**BEST PRACTICES TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY
GANG PROBLEMS:
OJJDP'S COMPREHENSIVE GANG MODEL**

EXCERPTS TO INCLUDE: *PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT, AND
DEVELOPMENT OF OJJDP'S COMPREHENSIVE GANG MODEL*

To view or download the entire version of the OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model
go to: <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov>



Best Practices To Address Community Gang Problems

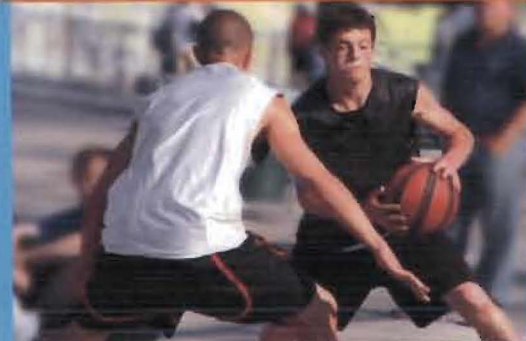
OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model



OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention



Innovation • Partnerships
Safer Neighborhoods



Purpose and Organization of the Report



This Report provides guidance for communities that are considering how best to address a youth gang problem that already exists or threatens to become a reality. The guidance is based on the implementation of the Comprehensive Gang Model (Model) developed through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and most recently tested in OJJDP's Gang Reduction Program.

The Report describes the research that produced the Model, notes essential findings from evaluations of several programs demonstrating the Model in a variety of environments, and outlines "best practices" obtained from practitioners with years of experience in planning, implementing, and overseeing variations of the Model in their communities.

The Model and best practices contain critical elements that distinguish it from typical program approaches to gangs. The Model's key distinguishing feature is a strategic planning process that empowers communities to assess their own gang problems and fashion a complement of anti-gang strategies and program activities. Community leaders considering this Model will be able to call on a strategic planning tool developed by OJJDP and available at no cost. OJJDP's Socioeconomic Mapping and Resource Topography (SMART) system is available online through the OJJDP Web site (go to <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp>, and select "Tools").

The main section of the report presents best practices for the Comprehensive Gang Model and highlights results of a National Youth Gang Center survey and a meeting of practitioners regarding their experiences in implementing the Model. This section contains specific practices that work best in a step-by-step planning and implementation process for communities using the Comprehensive Gang Model framework and tools.



Section 1:

Development of OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model



Research Foundation of the Comprehensive Gang Model

The Comprehensive Gang Model is the product of a national gang research and development program that OJJDP initiated in the mid-1980s. A national assessment of gang problems and programs provided the research foundation for the Model, and its key components mirror the best features of existing and evaluated programs across the country.

National Assessment of Gang Problems and Programs

In 1987, OJJDP launched a Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Research and Development Program that Dr. Irving Spergel of the University of Chicago directed. In the initial phase, the researchers conducted the first comprehensive national assessment of organized agency and community group responses to gang problems in the United States (Spergel, 1990, 1991; Spergel and Curry, 1993). It remains the only national assessment of efforts to combat gangs. In the second phase, Spergel and his colleagues developed a composite youth gang program based on findings from the national assessment.

In the research phase of the project (phase one), Spergel's research team attempted to identify every promising community gang program in the United States based on a national survey. At the outset, this study focused on 101 cities in which the presence of gangs was suspected. The team found promising gang programs in a broad range of communities across the Nation. Once programs and sites were identified, the team collected information on the magnitude and nature of local gang problems from representatives of each agency or organization that other

participants identified as being affiliated with or being a partner in each local program. Spergel and his team of researchers interviewed program developers and reviewed all available program documentation.

The more demanding project goal was to identify the contents of each program and self-reported measures of success. The team made an effort to identify the "most promising" programs. In each of the most promising community programs, the research team identified the agencies that were essential to the success of the program. Finally, Spergel and his team made site visits to selected community programs and agencies.

Spergel and Curry (1993, pp. 371–72) used agency representatives' responses to five survey questions¹ to determine the strategies that communities across the country employed in dealing with gang problems. From respondents' answers to these questions, the research team identified five strategies—community mobilization, social intervention, provision of opportunities, organizational change and development, and suppression (see "Five Strategies in OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model" on page 2).²

Development of the Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Program Model

Spergel and his colleagues (Spergel, 1995; Spergel et al., 1992; Spergel and Curry, 1993) developed the Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Program Model as the final product of the gang research and development program that OJJDP funded. From the information gathered through its multimethod study in phase one (Spergel, Curry, et al., 1994), the Spergel team developed technical assistance manuals for each of the 12 types of agencies that should be part of a successful local community response to gangs, including organizations that range from grassroots child-serving agencies to law enforcement, courts, and prosecutors' offices (Spergel, Chance, et al., 1994).

Spergel and his colleagues also offered the general community design of an ideal Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Program Model. An ideal program should undertake several action steps (Spergel, Chance, et al., 1994, pp. 2–5):

- **Addressing the problem.** A community must recognize the presence of a gang problem before it can do anything meaningful to address the problem.
- **Organization and policy development.** Communities must organize effectively to combat the youth gang problem.

- **Management of the collaborative process.** In a typical community, the mobilization process evolves through several stages before fruition.
- **Development of goals and objectives.** These must include short-term suppression and outreach services for targeted youth, and longer term services, such as remedial education, training, and job placement.
- **Relevant programming.** The community must systematically articulate and implement rationales for services, tactics, or procedures.
- **Coordination and community participation.** A mobilized community is the most promising way to deal with the gang problem.
- **Youth accountability.** While youth gang members must be held accountable for their criminal acts, they must at the same time be provided an opportunity to change or control their behavior.
- **Staffing.** Youth gang intervention and control efforts require a thorough understanding of the complexity of gang activity in the context of local community life.
- **Staff training.** Training should include prevention, intervention, and suppression in gang problem localities.

Five Strategies in OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model

Community Mobilization: Involvement of local citizens, including former gang-involved youth, community groups, agencies, and coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies.

Opportunities Provision: Development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth.

Social Intervention: Involving youth-serving agencies, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, police, and other juvenile/criminal justice organizations in "reaching out" to gang-involved youth and their families,

and linking them with the conventional world and needed services.

Suppression: Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth by agencies of the juvenile/criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups.

Organizational Change and Development: Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across agencies, to better address the gang problem.

Source: Spergel, 1995, pp. 171–296.

- **Research and evaluation.** Determining what is most effective, and why, is a daunting challenge.
- **Establishment of funding priorities.** Based on available research, theory, and experience, community mobilization strategies and programs should be accorded the highest funding priority.

In 1993, Spergel began to implement this model in a neighborhood in Chicago. Soon thereafter, OJJDP renamed the model the Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Intervention Model (Spergel, Chance, et al., 1994, p. iii).

OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model

The 1992 amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act authorized OJJDP to carry out additional activities to address youth gang problems. An OJJDP Gang Task Force outlined plans for integrated of-ficewide efforts to provide national leadership in the areas of gang-related program development, research, statistics, evaluation, training, technical assistance, and information dissemination (Howell, 1994; Tatem-Kelley, 1994).

This background work led to the establishment of OJJDP's Comprehensive Response to America's Youth Gang Problem. The Comprehensive Response was a five-component initiative that included establishment of the National Youth Gang Center, demonstration and testing of OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model, training and technical assistance to communities implementing this Model, evaluation of the demonstration sites implementing the Model, and information dissemination through the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse. Implementation and testing of the Comprehensive Gang Model were the centerpiece of the initiative. OJJDP prepared two publications specifically to support demonstration and testing of the Model: *Gang Suppression and Intervention: Problem and Response* (Spergel, Curry, et al., 1994), and *Gang Suppression and Intervention: Community Models* (Spergel, Chance, et al., 1994).

Communities that use the Comprehensive Gang Model will benefit from the simplified implementation process that OJJDP has created. OJJDP synthesized the elements of the Comprehensive Gang Model into five steps:

1. The community and its leaders acknowledge the youth gang problem.
2. The community conducts an assessment of the nature and scope of the youth gang problem, leading to the identification of a target community or communities and population(s).
3. Through a steering committee, the community and its leaders set goals and objectives to address the identified problem(s).
4. The steering committee makes available relevant programs, strategies, services, tactics, and procedures consistent with the Model's five core strategies.
5. The steering committee evaluates the effectiveness of the response to the gang problem, reassesses the problem, and modifies approaches, as needed.

These steps have been tested in several settings. Information on those initiatives is provided in appendix A.

The Comprehensive Gang Model in Action—OJJDP's Gang Reduction Program

Over the years, OJJDP has tested and refined the Comprehensive Gang Model to meet new challenges and address gang problems in new locations. Most recently, OJJDP developed and funded the Gang Reduction Program.

Gangs are often the result of system failures or community dysfunction. So, to address youth gang violence, the OJJDP Administrator decided to test whether the Model could be used to initiate community change in certain cities. In 2003, OJJDP identified four demonstration sites: Los Angeles, CA; Richmond, VA; Milwaukee, WI; and North Miami Beach, FL. Each test site faced a different gang problem.

Once sites had been identified, OJJDP held meetings with senior political and law enforcement officials and made an offer: OJJDP would provide resources to support a test of the Comprehensive Gang Model if the city agreed to change how they currently addressed youth gang problems. Each city would now focus on balancing gang prevention with enforcement and commit to using community organizations and faith-based groups to ultimately sustain the work. Additionally, each site would have a full-time coordinator, funded by OJJDP, with direct access to senior political and police leadership. This coordinator would be free from substantive program responsibilities and would ensure that each participating agency or organization met its obligations. He or she would also ensure and that the data and information generated by the effort would be collected and shared. Each participating agency remained independent, but was under the oversight of the gang coordinator, who had the ability to obtain support or intervention from OJJDP leadership and local authorities (e.g., mayor, police chief, or governor).

In addition to reducing gang violence, the goal of GRP was to determine the necessary practices to create a community environment that helps reduce youth gang crime and violence in targeted neighborhoods. Because of this, GRP focused on two goals: to learn the key ingredients for success and to reduce youth gang delinquency, crime, and violence. GRP accomplishes these goals by helping communities take an integrated approach when targeting gangs:

- **Primary prevention** targets the entire population in high-crime and high-risk communities. The key component is a One-Stop Resource Center that makes services accessible and visible to members of the community. Services include prenatal and infant care, afterschool activities, truancy and dropout prevention, and job programs.
- **Secondary prevention** identifies young children (ages 7–14) at high risk and—drawing on the resources of

schools, community-based organizations, and faith-based groups—intervenes with appropriate services before early problem behaviors turn into serious delinquency and gang involvement.

- **Intervention** targets active gang members and close associates, and involves aggressive outreach and recruitment activity. Support services for gang-involved youth and their families help youth make positive choices.
- **Suppression** focuses on identifying the most dangerous and influential gang members and removing them from the community.
- **Reentry** targets serious offenders who are returning to the community after confinement and provides appropriate services and monitoring. Of particular interest are displaced gang members who may cause conflict by attempting to reassert their former gang roles.

The program has several key concepts:

- Identify needs at the individual, family, and community levels, and address those needs in a coordinated and comprehensive response.
- Conduct an inventory of human and financial resources in the community, and create plans to fill gaps and leverage existing resources to support effective gang-reduction strategies.
- Apply the best research-based programs across appropriate age ranges, risk categories, and agency boundaries.
- Encourage coordination and integration in two directions: vertically (local, State, and Federal agencies) and horizontally (across communities and program types).

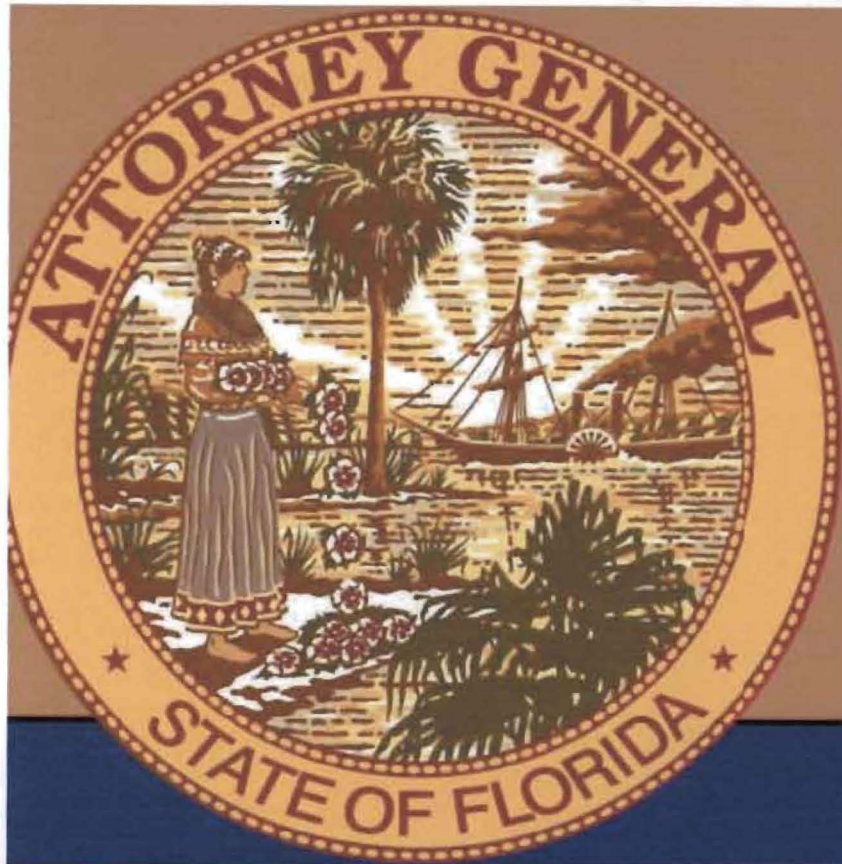
Highlights of activities from each of the Gang Reduction Program sites—Richmond, VA; Los Angeles, CA; North Miami Beach, FL; and Milwaukee, WI—are presented in the next section.

➤ **APPENDIX B**

FLORIDA GAND REDUCTION STRATEGY
2008-2012

EXCERPTS TO INCLUDE: *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*
AND *MEASURING SUCCESS*

To view or download the entire version of the Florida Gang Reduction Strategy go to:
<http://www.safeflorida.net/safestreets>



Florida Gang Reduction Strategy 2008 - 2012

**Office of the Attorney General
Bill McCollum**

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.

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.

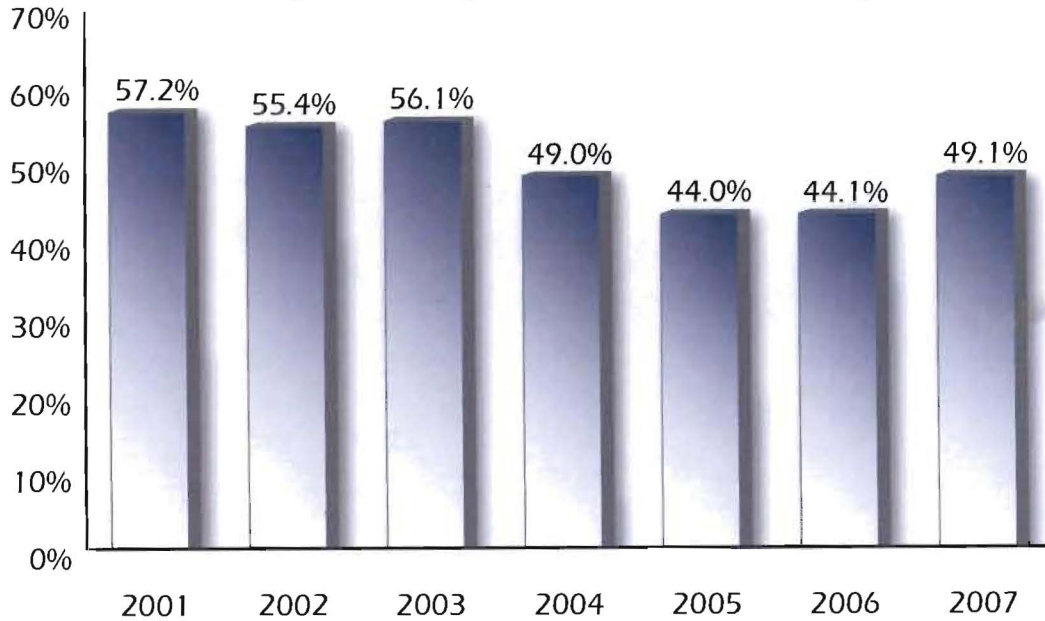
Both community leaders and the Department of Corrections will call upon members of the coordinating council for any assistance they may be able to give in developing or carrying out this plan for re-entering ex-offenders.

Importance of Metrics

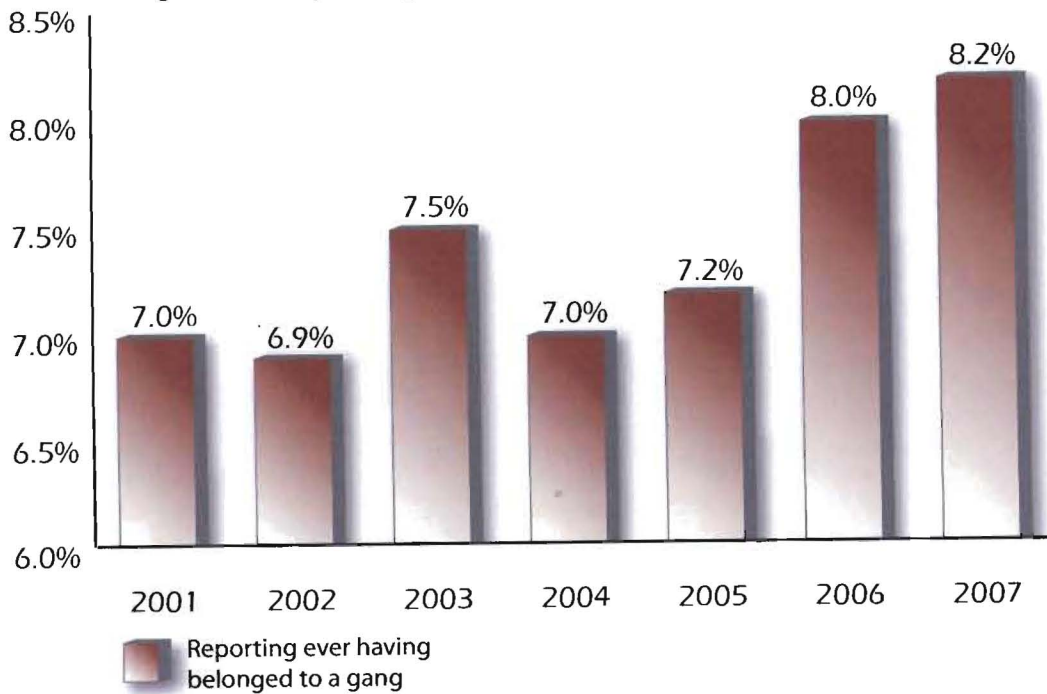
Metrics are essential to the carrying out of the objectives of this strategy. Each regional task force should not only develop a plan for carrying out its objectives, but also devise its own system to measure progress and success. The data to be gathered as described here will be necessary not only as 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)

Percent of High School Gang Members That Joined Before Age 14

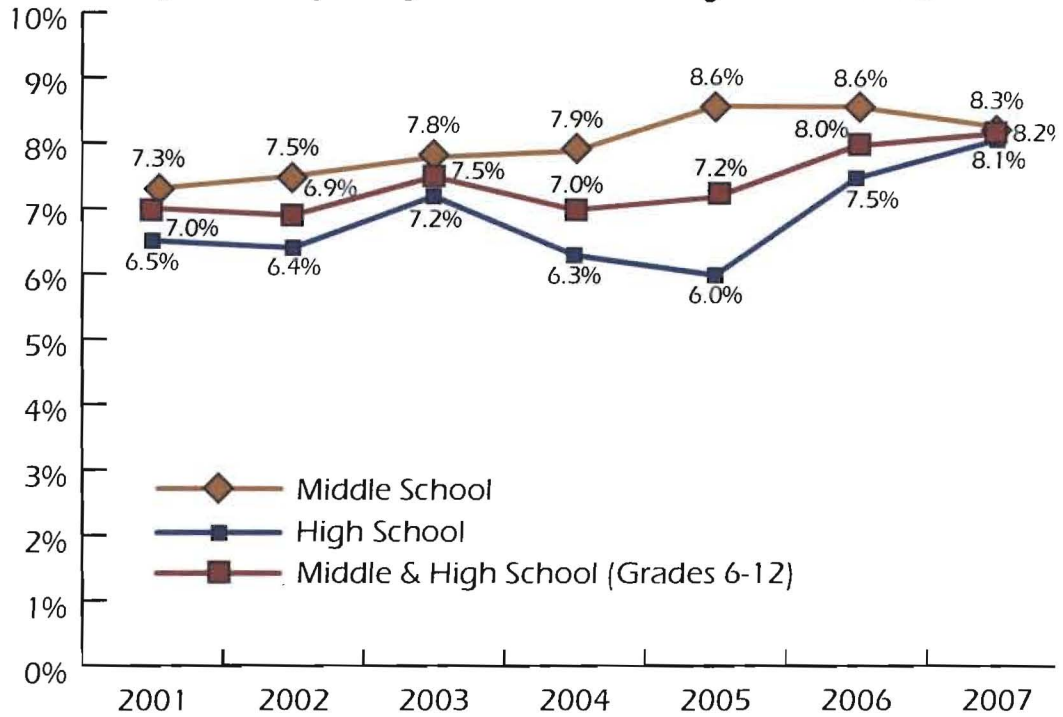


Gang Membership Among Florida's Middle and High School Students

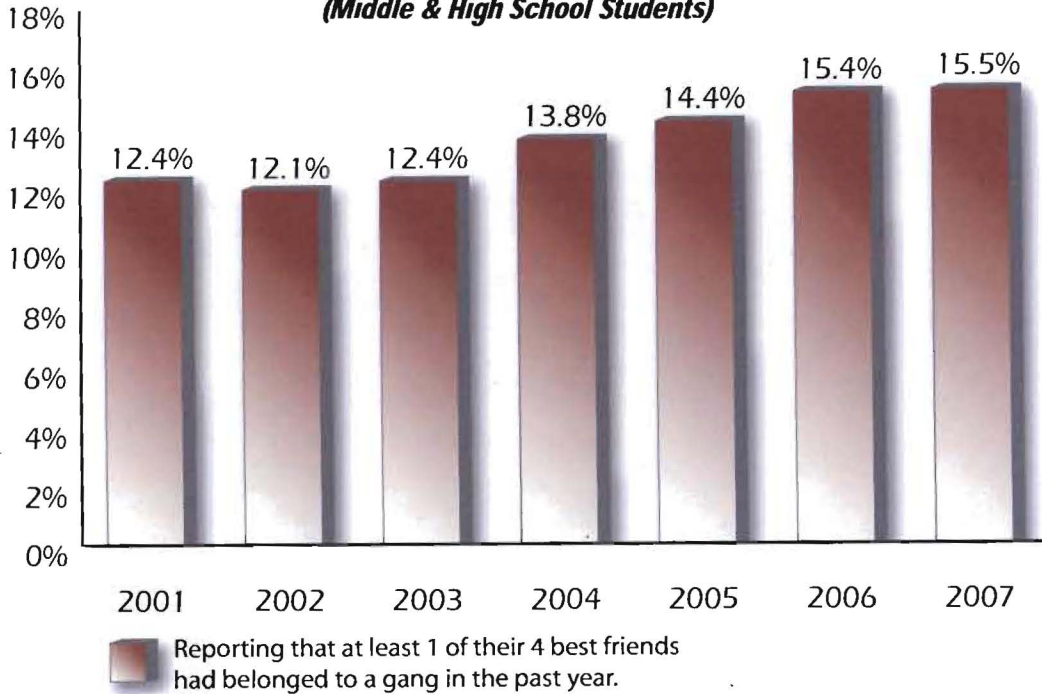


Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)

Gang Membership Among Florida's Middle and High School Students

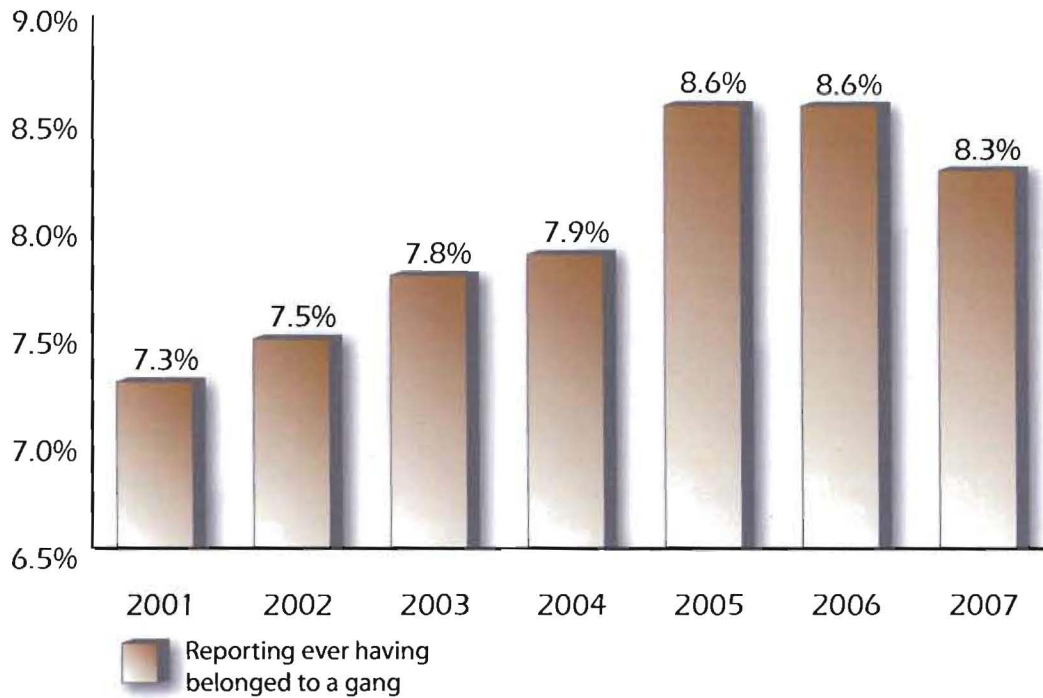


In the Past Year, How Many of Your Four Best Friends Had Been Members of a Gang? (Middle & High School Students)

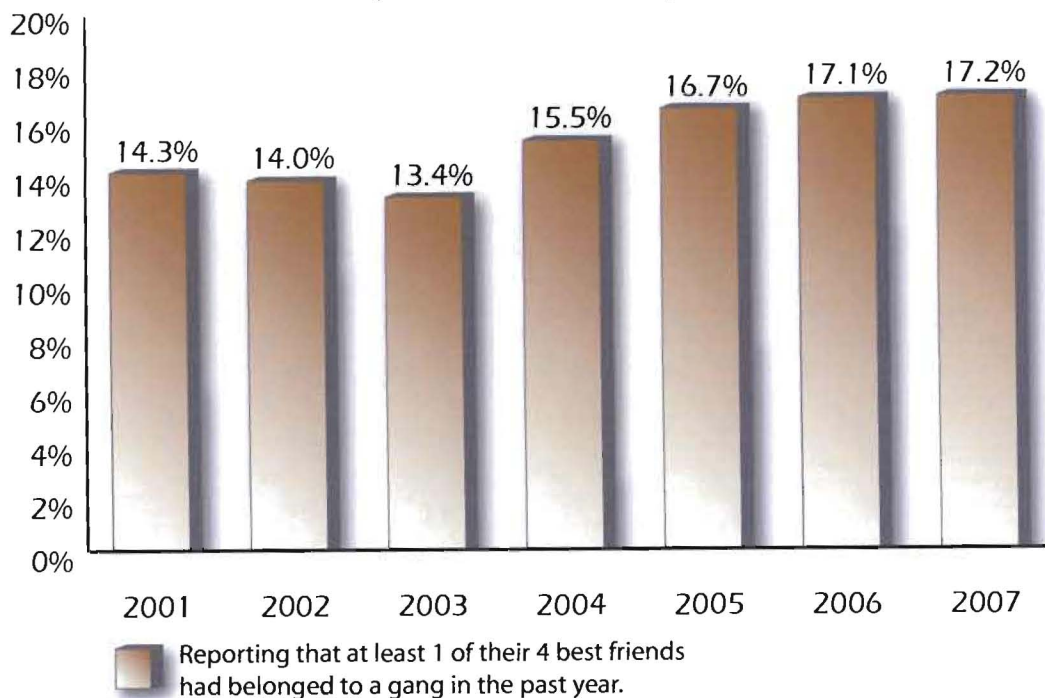


Gang Data From the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (2001-2007)

Gang Membership Among Florida's Middle School Students

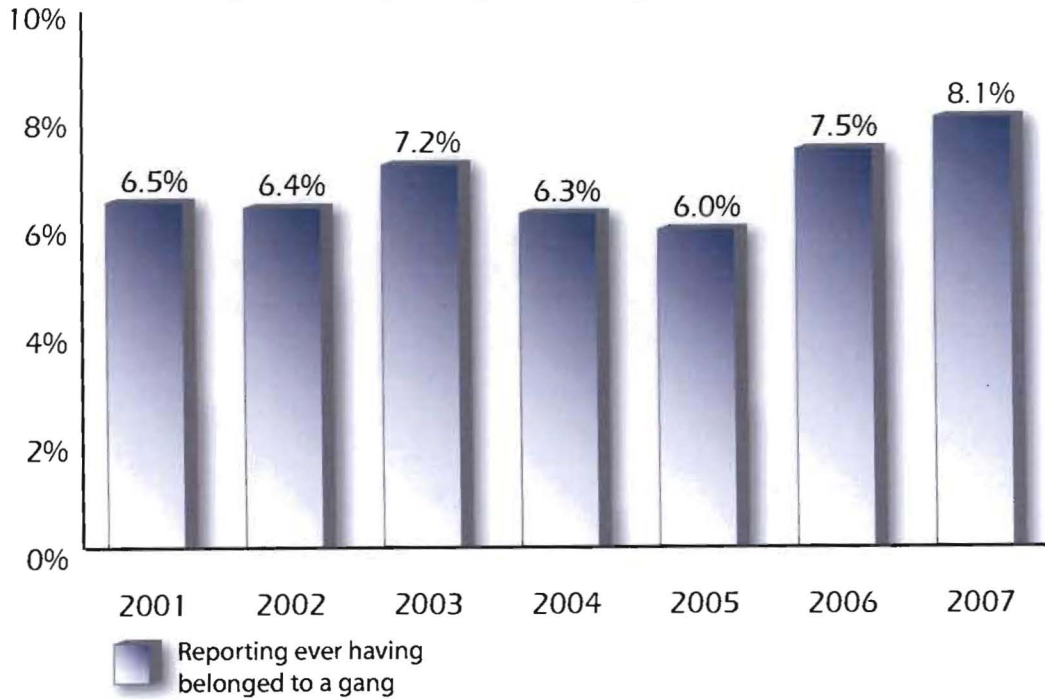


In the Past Year, How Many of Your Four Best Friends Had Been Members of a Gang? (Middle School Students)



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

Gang Membership Among Florida's High School Students



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

