



OJJDP

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

July 1997

JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Mobilizing Communities To Prevent Juvenile Crime

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Youth violence concerns every American citizen because it destroys the social fabric of communities. Effective reduction of youth violence and victimization requires a balance of strong policing, holding youth accountable for their behavior, and targeted prevention through community action. OJJDP recognizes the need for locally driven efforts to effect long-term solutions and supports communities that are making such efforts. Through Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs (Community Prevention Grants), OJJDP allocated \$20 million in fiscal year 1997 to States to comple-

ment law enforcement and justice system efforts by helping local communities foster strong families and nurture law-abiding and healthy children.

Local communities are using Community Prevention Grants and matching funds to develop research-based delinquency prevention programs that are locally controlled. The programs supported by these grants seek to halt violent crime before it begins by offering young people opportunities to engage in productive and positive activities.

Investing in Prevention

As more communities attempt to prevent youth crime by developing and implementing long-term solutions, the demand for resources, best practices, and strategies continues to grow. If this country is to reduce delinquency and resultant criminality, there must be a coordinated, substantial, and sustained public and private investment of financial and human resources in families, communities, and the systems that support and protect them.

The importance and utility of making these types of investments, and efforts that have been successful, are described in major reports such as the Carnegie Corporation's *A Matter of Time and Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a*

From the Administrator

If we are to prevent the juvenile crime that is tearing the social fabric of our Nation, we must invest our human resources and financial capital in both activities designed to ensure our immediate public safety and those aimed at the long-term prevention of juvenile crime. The most effective prevention initiatives are those that are locally designed, controlled, and implemented. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funds Community Prevention Grants under Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to help communities in 49 States, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia prevent juvenile delinquency. The grants, which require a 50-percent cash or in-kind match, have stimulated additional funding in many participating communities.

Mobilizing Communities To Prevent Juvenile Crime provides promising prevention approaches, summarizes the risk factors challenging youth, features effective prevention programs supported by OJJDP, and describes planning, training, and technical assistance opportunities available through OJJDP's Community Prevention Grants. By combining the knowledge we have now concerning effective prevention programs and a community-based planning and implementation program, we are confident we are maximizing our opportunity for success.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

In Marquette County, Wisconsin, Community Prevention Grants funded the Child At-Risk program, which provides family management skills training and a tailored parenting education program designed for typically hard-to-reach parents.

In Crawford County, Kansas, community leaders have established the Truancy Diversion Counseling program to counsel at-risk youth and keep them in school and out of trouble. Community mobilization efforts such as this are critical to making the Nation's streets safer.

New Century.¹ A 1992 study reported in *A Matter of Time* determined that only 60 percent of an adolescent's nonsleeping time is taken up by school, homework, chores, meals, or employment. Many adolescents spend the remaining 40 percent of their nonsleeping time alone, with peers and without adult supervision, or with adults who might negatively influence their behavior. Such conditions are especially severe in poor neighborhoods, but they occur among families of all income levels and backgrounds in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. The report recommends that youth programs address skill development in the following areas:

- ◆ Health and physical well-being.
- ◆ Personal and social competence.
- ◆ Cognitive and educational competence.
- ◆ Preparation for work.
- ◆ Leadership and citizenship.

Programs across the country are providing these supports and skills, with good results. An example is the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring program, which was evaluated by Public/Private Ventures in 1995.² The evaluation compared 959 10- to 16-year-olds with mentors to a similar group of youth without mentors. After 18 months, participants with mentors in the BBBS program:

- ◆ Were 46 percent less likely to start using drugs and 27 percent less likely to start using alcohol.
- ◆ Were almost 33 percent less likely to strike someone.

- ◆ Skipped school 50 percent less than the control group, felt more competent about doing school work, skipped fewer classes, and showed modest gains in their grade point averages.
- ◆ Improved peer and family relationships.

While BBBS is able to provide mentors to 75,000 children, it is estimated that an additional 15 million youth could benefit from having a mentor.

Another agency that has excelled at providing constructive supervised prevention programs for youth is the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (B&GCA). B&GCA has been providing these kinds of quality services for more than 137 years and currently provides such services to more than 1,850 neighborhoods throughout the Nation. Youth involved in B&GCA throughout the country participate in recreational, academic improvement, social and life skills development, community service, gang prevention, substance abuse and alcohol use prevention, and health education activities. These safe havens have reduced juvenile crime by 13 percent and drug activity by 22 percent.³

Numerous reports describe additional promising prevention investments, including OJJDP's *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*; *Delinquency Prevention Works*; and *Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan*.⁴ Much is known about what causes delinquency and how to prevent it. These reports provide countless examples of prevention

"The application of the Community Prevention Grants model goes beyond the funding of specific projects. Risk-focused prevention provides an important framework for communities. It appears to be broad enough, with enough substance, to get people focused and mobilized in a way that other programs do not. Focusing on the risk-focused model has proven to be an extremely unifying effort for prevention. It has been instrumental in giving communities a rallying point, and has brought brand new players to the table. It is extremely powerful for our prevention efforts!"—Juvenile Justice Specialist from a Midwestern State

and intervention programs that work to improve school attendance, increase family functioning, decrease drug use, reduce violent incidents, and decrease recidivism.

The key to effective prevention lies in reducing the risk (negative) factors for delinquency in a child's life and putting protective (positive) factors in place. To accomplish this, judges; probation and parole officers; police; social service providers; businesses; youth service workers; city, county, State, and Federal leaders; school officials; mental health providers; community members; the media; parents; and youth all must apply their individual expertise and collective knowledge about what works to prevent youth violence, and they must reach children at an early age.

The table on page 3 summarizes risk factors identified in longitudinal studies as predictors of adolescent health and behavior problems. The risk factors are clustered in different domains: community, family, school, and individual/peer. To be most effective, prevention programs must operate in all of these domains and

"The Community Prevention Grants training gave us the tools to assess our community's needs, educate our community, and, as a result, mobilize citizens to join us in moving forward with an action plan that has been created with a great deal of community input."—Prevention policy board members from Santa Ana, California



Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Risk Factors for Health and Behavior Problems

Risk Factors	Adolescent Problem Behaviors				
	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teenage Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence
Community					
Availability of Drugs	✓				
Availability of Firearms		✓			✓
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	✓	✓			✓
Media Portrayals of Violence					✓
Transitions and Mobility	✓	✓		✓	
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Organization	✓	✓			✓
Extreme Economic Deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family					
Family History of the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Family Management Problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior	✓	✓			✓
School					
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic Failure Beginning in Elementary School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Commitment to School	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Individual/Peer					
Rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constitutional Factors	✓	✓			✓

Data Source: J.D. Hawkins, and R.F. Catalano. 1995. *Risk-Focused Prevention: Using the Social Development Strategy*. Seattle: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc.

Source: J.C. Howell, ed. 1995 (May). *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.



Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

provide a network of support and services for youth. Again, this requires all members of the community to work together.

Prevention is also cost effective. The average total cost of the violent crime career of young adults 18 to 23 years old is \$1.1 million, and 1 year of juvenile incarceration costs approximately \$34,000.⁵ In contrast, prevention and early intervention program costs are substantially lower and can save money over the long run. The Syracuse Family Development Research program showed through a 10-year followup study that delinquency was reduced by 91 percent when families were provided with parent-training home visits, training on safety issues, and other human services beginning prenatally and continuing until the children reached elementary school age.⁶ Another study of delinquency prevention programs in California demonstrated that every dollar spent on prevention resulted in a direct savings of \$1.40 to law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.⁷

In Blair County, Pennsylvania, key leaders report that, through the Community Prevention Grants coordinated planning process, service providers have adopted a communitywide common language and focus, and groups that had not previously worked together are now working together to see how prevention efforts can be implemented successfully.

Locally driven crime prevention efforts funded with OJJDP support through Community Prevention Grants provide communities with three critical ingredients for success:

1. A theory-driven, research-based prevention framework.
2. The tools, training, and technical assistance to bring a community together to build on that framework.
3. Local control of the process.

These elements embody what is known to be effective in prevention: locally driven efforts that use a comprehensive, risk- and protection-focused approach with activities that address all areas of young people's lives (that is, their family, school, peers, and community).

Jurisdictions supported by Community Prevention Grants are provided with assistance to assess their own delinquency prevention needs and plan, develop, and implement initiatives that are tailored to address their own unique local circumstances.

However, community prevention efforts alone cannot serve as the sole course of action in responding to the problems of juvenile delinquency and crime. In recognition of this, OJJDP's *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*⁸ promotes the use of prevention along with a spectrum of graduated sanctions and treatment options, including immediate intervention for first-time, nonviolent offenders; secure

"Title V [the Community Prevention Grants program] is changing ways of thinking about prevention program planning. Representatives from a variety of community sectors—including the courts, schools, police force, and healthcare, human services, and community organizations—are now working together and observing firsthand how prevention efforts can be successfully implemented. . . . The approach is the coordination piece that helps drive a better application of resources . . . and reduce the duplication of effort that often occurs within human services."—Human Services Director from Pennsylvania

sanctions for serious offenders; and aftercare to reintegrate juveniles into the community.

OJJDP's Support for Local Community Mobilization and Crime Fighting

In the 1992 reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, Congress established the Title V Community Prevention Grants program. Congress found that (1) it is more effective in human and fiscal terms to prevent delinquency than to attempt to control or change it; (2) one-half or more of all States were unable to spend any juvenile justice formula grant funds on delinquency prevention because of other priorities; and (3) Federal incentives were needed to assist States and local communities in mobilizing delinquency prevention policies and programs.

Under Title V, OJJDP awards grants to States (to be transmitted through State Advisory Groups (SAG's) to qualified units of general local government) to implement local delinquency prevention plans. Congress appropriated \$13 million to fund Community Prevention Grants in fiscal year 1994 and \$20 million per year in fiscal years 1995, 1996, and 1997.

Community Prevention Grants are discretionary, but OJJDP has chosen to allocate the funds (with a minimum award of \$100,000) to States based on the number of juveniles in the State who are subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction. States receiving funds then make

Community Prevention Grants awards through a competitive process to qualified units of general local government that are collaborating with a range of service providers and individuals in the community, including parents and youth. Each SAG determines the number of 1- to 3-year grants and the amount awarded to each one.

Grants provide only the incentive or seed money to jumpstart a community prevention program. The State or the unit of general local government is required to provide a 50-percent cash or in-kind match for each grant to ensure community investment in the program and to maximize the impact of the Title V Community Prevention Grants program.

Results of the Program

The results of the Community Prevention Grants program have been very promising thus far. As stated in OJJDP's most recent reports to Congress,⁹ during the first 3 years of Community Prevention Grants implementation, OJJDP funds have supported approximately 400 communities in 49 States, 5 territories, and the District of Columbia in their efforts to provide risk- and protection-focused prevention programs. In addition, more than 4,300 local leaders and practitioners have received training to develop comprehensive community prevention programs.

The General Accounting Office's (GAO's) August 1996 study of Community Prevention Grants indicated that the program has been instrumental in bringing a broad-based group of community residents together to design prevention programs to address the specific needs of their community.¹⁰ The level of community ownership and investment in these programs has been impressive, as shown by local matches exceeding 90 percent (when only 50 percent of the Federal share is required by the program).

The programs being implemented by each community vary. They include:

- ◆ *Counseling and intervention services* that involve parents, families, and juveniles in managing stress, resolving conflicts, and reducing violent behavior.
- ◆ *Programs for parents* that improve their parenting skills, provide support groups, increase parent-child interactions, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

In Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Community Prevention Grants funds have supported renovation of an old high school building to provide family support services; outreach workers to provide one-to-one counseling, academic assistance, family strengthening, and prosocial and recreational activities; and training for young males to serve as advocates and role models for male students in grades one through six. As a result of this individualized approach, 47 of the 48 students have improved their academic performance, and absenteeism has been reduced by 50 percent.

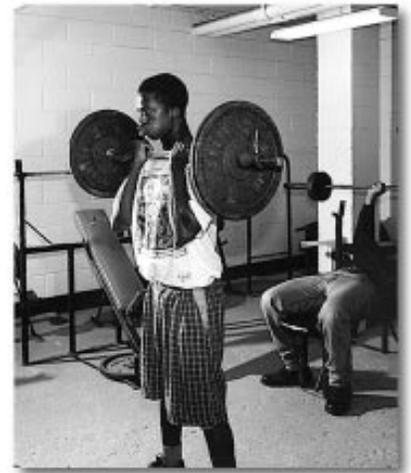


Photo courtesy of Boys & Girls Clubs of America

- ◆ *Health services* that provide prenatal care and health education classes for new parents in collocated health and community centers, etc.
- ◆ *School-based programs* that target truancy, school failure, violence, teen pregnancy, antisocial behavior, and drug and alcohol abuse.
- ◆ *Economic development and training programs* that include job readiness and skill development, startup and operation of neighborhood and family businesses, and neighborhood rehabilitation.
- ◆ *Law enforcement-sponsored programs* that include community policing, police liaisons to community schools, arbitration/mediation programs supervised by law enforcement representatives, and gang and gun prevention and intervention.



Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

- ◆ *Comprehensive community mobilization activities* that meet the needs of youth by streamlining available services so that efficient, unduplicated services are provided to the entire community by local youth and family service systems, community forums, and educational activities.

The August 1996 GAO report also found that while almost 300 Community Prevention Grants were made by States, 286 qualified applications submitted to State agencies for funding in 1994 and 1995 were not funded specifically because of the lack of adequate funding.

Delinquency Prevention Planning, Training, and Technical Assistance

While community leaders and citizens know they have problems involving and affecting young people, they are not always aware of the root causes of the problems or the best ways to address them. Community Prevention Grants foster data collection and analysis to support well-founded and outcome-driven delinquency prevention plans. This strategic approach

"After the [risk and resource assessment] training, we completed our . . . assessment and are so grateful for the focus this has given to our community. We had a classic case of turfism for years here. Now folks are calling us and asking to become a part of this prevention process."—
Key leader from Visalia, California



Photo courtesy of Boys & Girls Clubs of America

strengthens and complements a community's locally driven crime prevention mobilization efforts and resources. Recognizing that a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach dramatically increases the efficacy of prevention efforts while reducing duplication of services, Community Prevention Grants require the formation of a multidisciplinary planning board or a prevention policy board.

Through discretionary funding, OJJDP provides training and technical assistance at no cost to help communities organize key community leaders around the principles of prevention programming, comprehensive delinquency prevention plan development, and delinquency prevention program implementation.

Momentum created by the risk assessment forums in Tallahassee, Florida, has helped their community prevention initiative establish a core of 350 volunteers ready to help implement program activities. In one meeting, a minister offered to "walk the streets at night if that is what it takes to make this happen." They have begun a program that will use volunteer professional family and marriage therapists to oversee a group of student therapists who provide counseling to low-income families in the community while gaining hours of practical experience needed for graduation.

The OJJDP training is available to States by request and consists of two phases. The first is a 1-day key leaders orientation for the major policymakers, business leaders, and high-level agency executives in the community. This workshop familiarizes the community's leadership with the research basis for risk- and protection-focused prevention and strategies for gaining the commitment of community leaders to a long-term, comprehensive prevention strategy. The second phase consists of a 3-day workshop with hands-on exercises and activities for the local prevention policy board members and staff who are involved in developing the community's 3-year delinquency prevention plan. In this training, the community members learn how to use the research framework to identify and inventory their community risk factors and resources (protective factors) and use the data as the basis to prepare the community's delinquency prevention plan.

Somerset County, New Jersey, found that by focusing on risk-factor data they were able to target their prevention programs to at-risk 9- to 14-year-old youth and design afterschool programs to provide tutoring, mentoring, skills building and cultural awareness activities, training on goal setting, and educational field trips.

This training also facilitates coordination at the Federal, State, and local levels by leveraging resources from other community-based initiatives such as those funded by foundation, city, county, State, and Federal programs. By coordinating program efforts and providing prevention training to other collaborators from areas such as health and human services, housing, education, and labor (for example, Federal Empowerment Zones, Community Oriented Policing Services, the Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention's Community Partnerships, etc.), OJJDP helps community leaders maximize opportunities and make strategic planning and program implementation more responsive to the specific needs of the local community.¹¹

Local Community Prevention Grants program recipients have actively pursued coordination and collaboration of prevention activities and services. For example, Maryland and Utah have pooled resources and leveraged Federal program funds such as Family Preservation dollars to support community prevention activities. State representatives and community board members from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, believe that the community's risk assessment was instrumental in securing a \$3 million Empowerment Zone award.

As a result of this training and support, applications for Community Prevention Grants reflect more investment in planning and research than other grant applications, with more measurable outcomes.

Obtaining Community Prevention Grants

Units of general local government (tribes with law enforcement responsibilities, cities, counties, towns, boroughs, parishes, villages, or general-purpose political subdivisions of a State) are eligible to compete for Community Prevention Grants in their State under the Title V program. These units of general local government must have a policy prevention board, a 3-year prevention plan, and a financial or in-kind match commitment of 50 percent. In addition, the applicant must be in compliance with the four core requirements of the JJDP Act: (1) not detaining status offenders or nonoffenders in secure detention or correctional facilities; (2) not detaining or confining juveniles in any institution where they have contact with adult detainees; (3) not detaining or confining juveniles in adult jails or lockups; and (4) making efforts to reduce the disproportionate confinement of minority youth where it exists.

Delinquency Prevention Evaluation

Evaluation of the Community Prevention Grants program takes place at both the national and local levels. OJJDP is funding an evaluation that will examine

how well individual local projects function in achieving their goals and how successful the overall national effort is.

To assist in this process, OJJDP funded the development, publication, and dissemination of the *Title V Delinquency Prevention Program: Community Self-Evaluation Workbook*.¹² It is designed to enable local communities to assess and improve their delinquency prevention programs. The *Workbook* provides user-friendly guidance on collecting data, analyzing program progress and impact, and using the resulting evaluation information to refine plans and programs as needed. Because the Community Prevention Grants average \$57,663 annually per community, these self-evaluations are a critical way to monitor a program's effectiveness while conserving scarce resources for an outside evaluation.

Regional evaluation-training workshops focusing on how State administrators can evaluate their delinquency prevention programs are being provided to State juvenile justice specialists upon request. A number of States have reported that local communities implementing the Community Prevention Grants program are enthusiastic about the OJJDP *Workbook* because it has helped them analyze their programming efforts. These data are critical because communities can assess, reassess, and take appropriate action to ensure that their community mobilization and prevention programs are responsive to their needs.

The Future

During the 1997 reauthorization process of the JJDP Act, legislation has been introduced to recast Title V as the At-Risk Children's Initiative, with a funding request of \$75 million for fiscal year 1998. This proposed legislation builds upon what has been learned from the implementation of the program. It would allow more communities to obtain more money to implement existing prevention plans, expand current plans to include early intervention activities, and foster creation and implementation of new prevention and early intervention plans.

Conclusion

Community mobilization focusing on locally developed solutions to long-term

crime prevention is effective and requires State and Federal support. The Community Prevention Grants program highlights OJJDP's efforts to support and build on the success of nationwide community mobilization efforts. Although Community Prevention Grants are modest, they serve as the foundation for a national delinquency prevention movement that provides communities with a viable framework for identifying the precursors of youth violence, delinquency, and crime. Subgrant recipients have moved well beyond merely implementing programs or replicating the latest popular methods. They are laying the groundwork for changes in the way they do business. Local communities throughout the Nation are taking proactive measures to prevent crime. Under the leadership of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Justice, in partnership with communities, associations, organizations, and individuals, has pledged to support these critical community mobilization efforts.

Endnotes

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For Further Information

To find out more about Community Prevention Grants and training, or to obtain the name of the juvenile justice specialist responsible for administering Community Prevention Grants in your State, contact the State Relations and Assistance Division, OJJDP, U.S. Department of Justice, 633 Indiana Avenue NW,

Washington, DC 20531; telephone: 202-307-5924. You also may obtain information or copies of the documents mentioned in this Bulletin by contacting the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000; telephone: 800-638-8736; fax: 301-519-5212; e-mail: askncjrs@ncjrs.org; fax-on-demand: 800-638-8736.

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

N CJ 165928

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