



# OJJDP Summary



## ang Suppression

### and Intervention: Community Models Research Summary

**A Publication of the  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

# Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was established by the President and Congress through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, Public Law 93–415, as amended. Located within the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP’s goal is to provide national leadership in addressing the issues of juvenile delinquency and improving juvenile justice.

OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. These initiatives are carried out by seven components within OJJDP, described below.

**Research and Program Development Division** develops knowledge on national trends in juvenile delinquency; supports a program for data collection and information sharing that incorporates elements of statistical and systems development; identifies how delinquency develops and the best methods for its prevention, intervention, and treatment; and analyzes practices and trends in the juvenile justice system.

**Training and Technical Assistance Division** provides juvenile justice training and technical assistance to Federal, State, and local governments; law enforcement, judiciary, and corrections personnel; and private agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

**Special Emphasis Division** provides discretionary funds to public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to replicate tested approaches to delinquency prevention, treatment, and control in such pertinent areas as chronic juvenile offenders, community-based sanctions, and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

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**Concentration of Federal Efforts Program** promotes interagency cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies with responsibilities in the area of juvenile justice. The program primarily carries out this responsibility through the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an independent body within the executive branch that was established by Congress through the JJDP Act.

**Missing and Exploited Children Program** seeks to promote effective policies and procedures for addressing the problem of missing and exploited children. Established by the Missing Children’s Assistance Act of 1984, the program provides funds for a variety of activities to support and coordinate a network of resources such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; training and technical assistance to a network of 43 State clearinghouses, nonprofit organizations, law enforcement personnel, and attorneys; and research and demonstration programs.

OJJDP provides leadership, direction, and resources to the juvenile justice community to help prevent and control delinquency throughout the country.

# Gang Suppression and Intervention: Community Models

## **Research Summary**

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# Foreword

Youth gangs and the problems associated with them were once thought to concern a relatively small number of major metropolitan areas whose gang troubles go back to the days of *West Side Story*.

No longer. As the challenge posed by gangs extends to a greater number of cities and to communities of more modest proportions, the need for comprehensive community efforts to address emerging and chronic gang problems intensifies.

Dr. Irving Spergel and his colleagues at the University of Chicago have conducted the first comprehensive national survey of organized agency and community group responses to gang problems in the United States. Their study is the only national assessment of efforts to combat gangs.

Dr. Spergel and his study team developed a comprehensive gang prevention and intervention model based on their national assessment. Its components are presented in this Summary. Implementation manuals were also developed.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is funding a multi-site demonstration of the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Program. The program uses the model developed by Dr. Spergel and his colleagues. An independent evaluation will also be funded. OJJDP's National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program is establishing a National Gang Assessment Resource Center and will provide technical assistance and training services to program sites across the country.

These models are recommended as effective policies, practices, and strategies for communities to combat gangs. We believe you will find them useful in your efforts to address the youth gang problem.

**John J. Wilson**

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## Introduction

In its model development stage, the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program prepared a set of policies and practices for the design and mobilization of community efforts by police, prosecutors, judges, probation and parole officers, corrections officers, schools, employers, community-based agencies, and a range of grassroots organizations. Prototype development is the second of four stages (Assessment, Prototype Development, Technical Assistance, and Testing) of a research and development process conducted in cooperation with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, to create promising approaches for the reduction of the youth gang problem.

The framework for the policies and procedures recommended in each of the 12 models is based upon 2 types of gang problems: chronic and emerging. Differential strategies of suppression and intervention consist of suppression, community mobilization, social intervention, social opportunities, organization change and development, and distinctive institutional missions. Issues of primary prevention are not addressed in these documents, which emphasize secondary prevention. A forthcoming report, *Preventing Involvement in Youth Gang Crime*, more fully addresses prevention issues.

A community with a chronic gang problem is characterized by a persistent, often acute pattern of gang violence and crime (including drug trafficking) beginning before the 1980's. A community with an emerging gang problem is associated with a pattern of gang crime that is less organized or virulent and more recent. The models focus on youth gang members ages 12 to 24. The models are concerned with policies and programs that address primarily gang-motivated crime in terms of juvenile and young adult commitment to gang violence, status, and turf and, secondarily, evolving gang-related problems of drug trafficking and more organized crime.

The authors propose that the lack of social opportunities available to a population and the degree of social disorganization present in a community largely account for its youth gang problem. Other contributing factors include institutional racism and deficiencies in social policy. The authors believe that the nature of a particular population's exposure to these structural conditions at the community level determines the character and prevalence of its youth gang problem.

Each model addresses the youth gang problem in terms of its community context and distinctive organizational missions. These become the basis for assessment of the youth gang problem, for selection of appropriate combinations of strategies and programs targeted to particular categories of youth gang members. In each model, the authors recommend an approach that mobilizes community interest and concern. The approach should:

- Neither exaggerate nor deny the problem's scope and seriousness.
- Develop consensus among key figures in the approach.
- Target both younger and older gang members who may be ready to give up gang crime activities.



**E**ach model addresses the gang problem in its community context.

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**A** gang problem must be recognized before it can be addressed.

However, no one can be sure that the policies and practices proposed to reduce the youth gang crime problem are effective until they are tested.

## **General community design**

These general and specific models for youth gang suppression and intervention assume that the problem of youth gangs and related criminal behavior, including extreme violence and drug trafficking, is mainly a function of two interacting conditions: poverty and social disorganization. Other significant or contributing factors include institutional racism, cultural misadaptation, deficiencies in social policy, and the availability of criminal opportunities. While many causes of the problem are generated by forces outside communities experiencing gang crime, much can be done to reduce the problem through mobilization of a network of local organizations and citizens and of resources at the city, State, and national levels. While we know a great deal about the problem, we have no sure-fire policies and programs, and our models need to be rigorously tested.

Specific policies and procedures must be designed to achieve the intermediate goals of suppression and intervention and the ultimate goal of reducing youth gang problem. Certain action areas must be addressed in implementing the key operational strategies of community mobilization, provision of opportunities, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development. These areas are problem assessment, development of youth gang policy, managing the collaborative process, creation of program goals and objectives, programming, coordination and community participation, youth accountability, staffing, training, research evaluation, and funding priorities.

**Assessing the problem.** The presence of a youth gang problem must be recognized before anything meaningful can be done to address it. Identification of manifest and underlying factors contributing to the problem is also important. Those with responsibility for addressing the problem—representatives of criminal justice and community agencies, grassroots organizations, schools, churches, local businesses, even gangs—should participate in describing its nature and causes and recommending appropriate solutions. Consensus must be developed on the definition of the youth gang problem—particularly by decisionmakers of key agencies, community organizations, and government units.

**Organization and policy development.** Communities must effectively organize to combat the youth gang problem. In cities with chronic youth gang activity, this means establishing local councils or statutory commissions (possibly by State statute) to set policy, and to coordinate programs resulting from such policy. Each council or commission should establish special committees on law enforcement, education, employment, and rehabilitation. A full range of strategies—prevention, intervention, and suppression—must be planned, but they must be appropriately ordered and prioritized. In cities with an emerging problem, less formal or inclusive structural arrangements may be required, but special emphasis must be given to efforts by schools and youth agencies to

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reach out to certain high-risk youth and their families through a variety of prevention and early intervention programs.

Policies of deterrence, prevention, or rehabilitation in themselves are insufficient to confront youth gang problems. Operational strategies and methods of carrying them out must be systematically integrated, inasmuch as the youth gang problem has different but interrelated elements. The gang problem is organic, particularly in communities with chronic gang activities. It affects different sectors of a population, such as older and younger gang members, their families, victims, and innocent bystanders in different but reciprocal and interrelated or systemic terms. It may not be realistic to deal only with preadolescents if adolescent and young adult gang members exercise great influence. It may be necessary not only to protect normal, conforming youth but to socialize disruptive youth gang members.

**Managing the collaborative process.** The community process for dealing with the gang problem goes through various stages before sustained program development and positive impact can occur. The first stage includes denial, initial organizing, and policymaking and the second stage, goal and problem displacement, and sometimes community conflict. The further community mobilization proceeds, the more likely there will be a positive outcome. In the critical third stage, charges of ineffective programs, institutional racism, and corruption may be made. Moral leadership must arise and agency programs develop accountability to make sure the right programs are launched and the right youth are targeted for suppression, opportunities, and services.

**Goals and objectives.** Longer term comprehensive strategies, including remedial education, training, and jobs as well as short-term suppression and outreach services for targeted youth, must be provided. A balance should be established between strategies that focus on individual or family change and those that emphasize system change and development or the provision of additional resources, such as the creation of a local youth conservation corps. Long-term sustained efforts that target the most vulnerable and hardcore youth gang members are required.

**Relevant programming.** Rationales for services, tactics, or procedures have to be systematically articulated and implemented. At present, we possess only rudimentary knowledge about programs or activities deemed to be effective. Some of these promising approaches include:

- Targeting, arresting, and incarcerating gang leaders and repeat violent gang offenders.
- Referring fringe members and their parents to youth services for counseling and guidance.
- Providing preventive services for youth who are clearly at risk.
- Crisis intervention or mediation of gang fights.
- Patrols of community “hot spots.”



**T**he gang problem affects different sectors in reciprocal terms.

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**T**he less internal control a youth exercises over his behavior, the more social control must be exerted.

- Close supervision of gang offenders by criminal justice and community-based agencies.
- Remedial education for targeted youth gang members, especially in middle school. Job orientation, training, placement, and mentoring for older youth gang members.
- Safe zones around schools.
- Vertical prosecution, close supervision, and enhanced sentences for hardcore youth gang members. (Vertical or “hardcore” prosecution puts the same prosecutor in charge of all aspects of a case from charging to sentencing.)

**Coordination and community participation.** A mobilized community is the most promising way to deal with the gang problem. The development of informed, consistent relations and procedures among and within organizations results in greater social control and social support and more effective targeting of the problem. Criminal justice agencies, community-based agencies, and local grassroots organizations must be involved in policy development and program implementation. Involvement of diverse neighborhood groups in gang neighborhoods is essential to a viable approach. Local leadership must be recruited and developed if later racial and class conflicts are to be avoided or minimized in the programs that are launched.

**Youth accountability.** Youth gang members must be held accountable for their criminal acts, but they also must be provided with opportunities to change or control this behavior. The less internal control a youth exercises over his own behavior, the more social control must be exerted to demonstrate that some behaviors are not acceptable. For some gang members, secure confinement will be necessary. For others, graduated degrees of community-based supervision, ranging from continuous sight or electronic supervision to total self-supervision, will be appropriate. It is important that youth understand that they will face consequences if they do not follow program rules or reasonable expectations.

**Staffing.** Youth gang suppression and intervention efforts require a thorough understanding of the complexity of gang activity in the context of local community life. The policymaker, administrator, or street-level worker should avoid recognizing or using the gang or gang processes as primary instruments or mechanisms for controlling or resolving a gang problem because that approach can contribute to gang cohesion and strengthen gang influence. The gang worker must clearly articulate values and practices that demonstrate that gang recruitment, intergroup conflict, and other forms of criminal behavior are unacceptable and will be punished. With those values expressed and operative, it is still possible for the agency or community worker to collaborate with youth gang members, neighbors, parents, and criminal justice and community-based agency representatives to deal effectively with gang crises and control various kinds of criminal behavior. This approach recognizes the existence of youth gangs, but rejects their legitimacy.

**Staff training.** Training should focus on the development of improved strategies of suppression and intervention in emerging and chronic gang problems.

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In emerging gang problem situations, greater attention to the specifics of gang identification and understanding the basis for gang dynamics is required. The limits of a simple, exclusive suppression strategy must be recognized. In cities with chronic problems, greater attention to cross-agency and community group collaboration is necessary, with special concern for developing remedial education, training, job development, and support services for youth gang members.

**Research and evaluation.** Relatively little policy- or program-relevant research is available to determine which strategies and practices lower crime rates among youth gang members. This study has hypothesized that the interrelated application of strategies of community mobilization and provision for social opportunities, combined to a lesser degree with suppression, organizational development, and social intervention, will lead to such a reduction, particularly of violence. One might further hypothesize that a complex, innovative, and interrelated agency and grassroots approach that gives due attention to policies and practices of rehabilitation and suppression will be more effective than a simple, specific agency-oriented approach, such as social intervention, that focuses either on suppression or rehabilitation. Furthermore, one could anticipate that broad-scale preventive approaches, such as exposing all youth in a gang milieu to anti-gang programs, will be less effective than defining and targeting a high-risk youth population and applying appropriate deterrent and rehabilitative procedures.

**Funding priorities.** While there is no clear way to determine which policies and procedures will work, we do know something about strategies and programs that do not work. Therefore, it is incumbent on funding agencies concerned with the reduction of gang delinquency and crime to avoid simple or isolated programs of recreation, nondirective counseling, street work, or massive arrest and incarceration. Based on available research, theory, and experience, community mobilization strategies and programs should be accorded the highest funding priority.

## Community mobilization

Success in the implementation of the prototype depends primarily on the effectiveness of community mobilization. Community mobilization is a process of consciousness raising that addresses the concerns and long-term interests of those most affected by the youth gang problem. It calls for objective identification of the problem's dimensions and the will and commitment of the community to act. The process depends on cooperation and collaboration of key groups and activists as well as appropriate use of gang crises by community and agency leaders to generate pressures that can enhance awareness of and improve responsiveness to the gang problem.

Failures or delays in community mobilization occur primarily because agencies and local community organizations seek to protect or enhance their particular agency or group interests, which may or may not be directly related to the gang problem. Issues of organizational turf and interpersonal or interagency rivalry and conflict may prevent discussion of common goals and objectives and the means for collaborative endeavors. Failures of community mobilization may also occur because of insensitivity to distinctive community racial, ethnic, or



**B**road-scale approaches to prevention are less effective than targeting high-risk youth.

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**G**ang members often fall between the cracks of social service programs and police sweeps.

class interests. Leaders of the mobilization process may insufficiently recognize and understand distinctive African-American, Latino, or Asian local community concerns and interests about gangs in the particular communities.

The community mobilization process can move forward only when a group of leaders committed to the resolution of the problems, develops a set of close relationships, relevant goals, and action plans based on mutual trust and agreement on the definition of the problem and what needs to be done. The plan that evolves must not only be supported by key political and economic forces in the local and broader community, but also meet at least partially the survival and developmental needs of existing and evolving agency programs and community groups.

The essence of the community mobilization process is to reinvigorate or reorganize community structures so that community energies and resources are developed to address the youth gang problem, and these resources are integrated and targeted on the gang problem. Youth gang members often fall between the cracks of social services, social opportunity programs, and police sweeps. Not only do criminal acts of individuals and groups add to the problems of youth gangs, but inappropriate responses by agencies and community groups fuel them.

## **Police**

The fundamental purpose of law enforcement is protecting the community from criminal activities. Protection is achieved through a combination of suppression and preventive activities. The police need to address emerging and chronic youth gang problems distinctively. Police organizational arrangements to deal with the youth gang problem should vary depending on the scope and seriousness of the problem and available departmental resources.

In communities confronted by emerging youth gangs, the police department may not necessarily organize a specialized gang unit but instead establish a gang detail or designate one or more officers as gang specialists. Other possibilities include assigning a crime analysis officer to identify chronic or serious juvenile gang offenders and requiring patrol officers in areas of high gang activity to focus their attention on these youth.

In some jurisdictions, community relations, narcotics, and juvenile divisions may take on specialized functions to deal with gangs. Generally, in larger communities where the gang problem is more serious and sophisticated, a specialized gang unit should be established. In some very large cities, specialized gang units may also be decentralized and placed in areas of need. In all cases, common definitions of the youth gang problem and ways to deal with it should characterize police policy and procedures.

Common definitions should be used as a basis for targeting selected gangs and gang members and for systematic measurement of the scope and seriousness of the problem. A youth gang (as a segment of a street gang) should be defined as a group ranging in age from 12 to 24, of variable size and organization, engaged

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in violent behavior, and characterized by communal or symbolic and often economic considerations, such as drug trafficking, burglary, robbery, and auto theft. A targeted gang member should be any youth who has a prior gang arrest. Special attention should be paid to leaders and to hardcore, repeat, and violent gang offenders. A gang incident or event should be an illegal act, especially a violent act, that arises out of gang motivation, interest, or circumstances, as distinct from an act committed by a youth who is a member of a gang.

The police department should adopt an approach that combines suppression of youth gang criminal acts through aggressive enforcement of laws, with community mobilization involving a broad cross-section of the community in combating the problem. Development of social intervention activities, while secondary, should be pursued. Useful interventions might include referring juveniles prone to gangs to youth service agencies, counseling such youth in collaboration with school guidance programs, and assisting community-based agencies in targeting youth gang members for job development.

The role of the police department in controlling and reducing gang crime should include investigation, intelligence, suppression, community relations, and training. Of special importance is investigation of gang crimes to obtain information and evidence useful in the prosecution of youth involved in gang crimes; maintaining standardized, updated information on gangs, gang members, and gang incidents; concentrating surveillance on gang leaders and other hardcore members; targeting special locations, particularly selected schools, for special patrol; prevention and control of those circumstances in which youth gang crises are likely to arise; training criminal justice and community-based agency staff and local citizens in gang recognition and appropriate intervention procedures; and assessment of the effectiveness of police policies and procedures in relation to youth gang crime.

The top administrator of the police department must be involved in determining gang policy and should insist on the officers' consistent and complete implementation of orders and procedures. The exercise of community leadership and a recognition of the scope of the gang problem will help elected leaders, agencies, and groups in the community deal with it openly and adequately. Where gang problems are emerging, administrators should not minimize the scope of the problem to protect the good name of the community but should call attention to incidents of gang crime. In contexts where gang problems have become chronic, the administrator should withstand pressures to simply increase the level of suppression and support the development of a comprehensive community approach targeted both to youth prone to gangs as well as other gang members.

Finally, special training is necessary for police officers assigned to deal with gang crimes. Knowledge from diverse fields must be integrated into the law enforcement mission. General information is required regarding such topics as the causes of gangs, their identification and nature, and the roles police should play with each type of agency or community group in addressing the problem. Police strategies and programs should be evaluated on a regular basis. Assessments should use measures of law enforcement outcome, internal organization, and community relations.



**T**he police should combine suppression of gang crime with community mobilization.

**P**rosecutors should pinpoint serious gang cases immediately after the police make arrests.

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## Prosecution

The prosecutor has a key responsibility to bring serious juvenile gang offenders to justice, protect the community, and serve the community's best interests. Jurisdictions with serious or chronic gang crime should develop a vertical prosecution approach to gangs in which a prosecutor follows a case from start to finish. This ensures that gang offenders or suspects will be targeted for investigation and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. Although the prosecutor should focus on suppression, attention must be given to other strategies such as community mobilization and improved coordination of agency services to youth gang members.

In jurisdictions with emerging or chronic gang-related problems, the prosecutor should concentrate on case selection and data management; collection and presentation of evidence; development of appropriate testimony; victim/witness protection; bail and detention recommendations; appropriate court disposition and sentencing decisions; and interagency collaboration and community mobilization with respect to gang crime control and prevention activities.

Prosecutors should pinpoint and control serious gang cases immediately after the police make arrests. Close working relationships between prosecutors and police and probation or parole are required. A screening process based on specific criteria and on an adequate information system to track cases is essential. Hardcore juvenile gang offenders should be targeted, tracked from juvenile to adult court, and appropriately prosecuted.

Prosecutors, usually with the aid of special gang investigators, should collect proper evidence to develop a viable gang case. Decisions on the correct charge and, if necessary, the collection of additional evidence, will reinforce the case. Guidelines should be developed that are acceptable to prosecutors and police regarding the selection of cases and determination of charges. Such policy and procedures should be made public.

The following procedures are recommended in preparing testimony and protecting victims and witnesses. Pretrial testimony should be videotaped when appropriate to avoid the problem of the victim or witness recanting or forgetting various aspects of past testimony at trial. A program should be developed to protect victims or witnesses at their residences; help can be provided in relocating them to a safe place. The prosecutor should take action as necessary, through use of police surveillance to prevent intimidation of witnesses before or during trial and inside or outside the courtroom, and by prosecuting gang intimidators, particularly those already on probation or parole. Testimony by a gang member, whether a witness for the prosecution or defense, should be carefully scrutinized for reliability. This is to counter manipulation of the justice system by gang members who may seek to avoid legal processes and settle gang conflicts on the street. The prosecutor should encourage use of witnesses such as police qualified by formal training or advanced education.

The prosecutor may serve the best interests of society through various bail, trial, and sentencing procedures. For example, the community, the gang offender, and the witness can be protected by convincing the court of the necessity of high

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bail for the adult gang offender or suspect and detention for the juvenile gang offender, especially when there is strong evidence of the likelihood of witness intimidation or retaliatory acts of violence. Nevertheless, it is important, particularly during trial proceedings, to clearly determine, based on adequate evidence, that the suspect is indeed a gang member and that the offense was gang motivated. The prosecutor should be cautious when making reference to a defendant's gang membership since such reference will prejudice the jury.

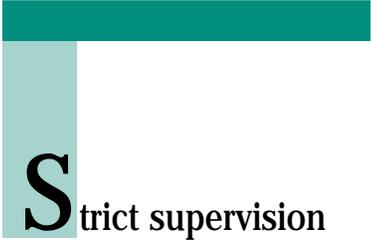
When defendants are found guilty, it may not always be in society's interest to incarcerate them for a very long period. The prosecutor's sentencing recommendation to the court should be based on the probation officer's presentence investigation as well as the possibility that strict supervision in the community and appropriate programming through remedial education and job placement may have longer term social benefits for both the community and the youthful offender than a prison sentence.

The prosecutor, particularly in chronic problem contexts, should become a key organizer and administrator of an interagency justice system or communitywide task force established to deal with the gang problem swiftly and forcefully. He should understand the scope and seriousness of the problem in the jurisdiction's communities and also encourage development of a variety of community-based strategies, including counseling, education, job training, youth employment, and citizen partnership in community gang prevention and control programs. Sensitivity to the need for a balanced approach in addressing the youth gang problem should be kept in mind in formulating legislation.

It is essential that the gang prosecutor receive specialized gang training which provides a thorough understanding of the nature and scope of the gang problem in different types of local communities, the genesis and control of the problem, and the application of relevant laws and prosecutorial procedures. A variety of experienced and knowledgeable teachers should be used, including police, academics, and community agency personnel. It is important to assess systematically the role of specialized or vertical gang prosecution and determine whether it is more cost effective than ordinary prosecution in reducing gang crime.

## Courts

The goals of the court should be first, that youth gang members receive a fair hearing; second, in the event a court petition is sustained, that court orders create conditions to rehabilitate the youth gang members, whether they are sent to a correctional institution or remain in the community; and third, that both the community and the offenders be protected from further violence and crime. The court should ordinarily incarcerate convicted or adjudicated, serious delinquent youth gang offenders, particularly gang leaders and hardcore members who engage in such violent gang activity as drive-by shootings and significant drug trafficking. However, peripheral or younger gang members who are adjudicated for minor gang-motivated crimes should receive short sentences, preferably supervision in the community with a community service requirement. Moreover, the judges' decisions should be conditioned by their understanding of the scope and seriousness of the gang problem in various communities in the court



**S**trict supervision may have longer term social benefits than a prison sentence.

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**J**udges should weigh the evidence that identifies the youth as a gang member and the crime as gang motivated.

district, whether the problem is emerging or chronic, and the community resources available to deal with individual gang problems.

A key problem the court faces is the lack of resources to carry out its varied justice system functions. The court needs to improve its capacity to access and provide gang-related information, for example, through a computerized data system containing gang-related data. This would facilitate judicial decision-making and transmittal of court information such as probation stipulations to police. The courts may require additional probation and service staff to supervise youth gang members adequately and to help them make social adjustments in the community. The court should provide probation officers with sanction authority that allows them to place youth gang members in detention for short periods under specified conditions.

Of special concern is the need of the juvenile court to understand the scope and seriousness of the youth gang problem and to deal with juvenile gang offenders in the juvenile court rather than transferring them to adult court. The juvenile court judge should observe rigid standards in making a transfer decision since such a decision signifies a loss of status for a class of youth that should be specially protected and deemed amenable to juvenile rehabilitation.

Adult and juvenile court judges should be especially concerned about the quality of evidence that identifies the youth before the court as a gang member and the crime as gang motivated. The judge needs to be knowledgeable about the different levels of proof required to establish the validity of these terms and to be careful not to accept hearsay evidence. The judge should make sure that the jury understands that the offense has clearly grown out of gang motivation or specific gang-related circumstances. The conspiratorial actions of the suspect must also be carefully assessed, even if the suspect was not present or directly involved in the gang crime.

In sentencing a gang member, the judge should consider, in addition to social and criminal history, the youth's position in the gang, record of gang membership and criminality, and the history and reputation of the gang itself, particularly the degree of its involvement in emerging or chronic gang problems. Gang membership and gang offenses tend to be limited in duration. Most youth gang members are committed to gangs for a relatively short period of time, usually between the ages of 14 and 18 years. Of primary importance in the judge's sentencing decision is the weight given to specific factors that can help the youth develop social competence and at the same time protect the community from further depredations.

If the judge places the youth gang member on probation, special arrangements should exist that guarantee an appropriate level of supervision, community restitution on behalf of the victim, and the delivery of appropriate services. Regular court review, whereby juvenile gang members appear in court and their compliance with court orders is reviewed, is desirable, usually monthly or bi-monthly. This review might involve checks on school attendance, grades, and conduct. If the judge decides to sentence a youth gang member to a correctional institution, the judge must take care that the youth is placed in a protected and secure environment, reducing gang-related opportunities and providing viable

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competency-building activities as an alternative to the gang lifestyle. Gang members who do not receive appropriate remedial education, vocational training, and social skill development services, whether in the institution or in the community, are likely to return to gang affiliation and related criminal behavior.

Judges should be visible members of community and interagency gang task forces. They can facilitate interagency communication, assist in resolving interagency differences, and provide guidance on constitutional issues in regard to measures proposed by criminal justice and community-based agencies. Judges should be advocates in the community and the legislature for meaningful measures for suppression and rehabilitation of gang members. On the other hand, given the limited knowledge of many judges about the nature, scope, and complexity of youth gang activities in particular communities in their jurisdictions, it is imperative that judges undertake field observation and training, especially in respect to the bases for community programs for gang members and differential sentencing approaches.

The development of juvenile court codes and policies may demand legislative attention. Because of the distinctive nature of the gang problem, the juvenile gang offender possibly should constitute a special category in juvenile law such as that of a minor requiring close supervision. The court should determine whether a processing decision, such as automatically waiving juvenile suspects who are gang members to adult court, is constitutional. Finally, differential sentencing decisions for youth gang members of similar backgrounds should be evaluated as to their effectiveness in reducing recidivism.

## **Probation**

Oversized caseloads, sometimes in excess of 200 per officer, seriously limit the probation department's ability to carry out its primary goals of protecting the community and diverting youth gang members from further crime. Moreover, a lack of resources has forced many probation departments to focus on surveillance of dangerous felony youth gang offenders. This prevents the court and probation from carrying out their rehabilitative function and contributes to the neglect of less delinquent youth gang members. While a few probation departments have established special units and programs to deal with gang offenders, most departments, even in jurisdictions with chronic gang problems, have as yet no special approaches or services for gang probationers.

The objectives of probation should be first, to assist the court in its sentencing decision (that is, to provide detailed information on the youth gang member, along with recommendations on possible sanctions and rehabilitative options); second, to enforce effectively the orders of the court and the laws of the State with special regard for limiting the criminal activity of youth gang members; third, to help criminal justice and community agencies as well as grassroots groups coordinate information and develop efforts to control and prevent gang behavior; and fourth, to broker and create special school and employment opportunities for youth gang probationers to meet their social development needs.



**J**udges should be advocates for the suppression and rehabilitation of gang members.

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**S**pecial preventive, early intervention, and intensive supervision programs need to be established for different types of gang offenders.

In areas with emerging or chronic gang problems, probation officers should give primary consideration to the risks of controlling probationers' behavior, if they remain in the community. A risk/needs assessment should be conducted for youth gang probationers in terms of their social and especially gang circumstances to construe the level of supervision and the intensity of services necessary for probationers and their families. The range of supervisory possibilities for youth include regular field supervision, intensive supervision, house arrest, curfew, electronic monitoring, and mandatory substance abuse testing.

In contexts with emerging problems, gang-affiliated probationers are likely to range from 11 to 17 and should probably be supervised as part of the regular juvenile probation caseload. Probation officers should use a service brokerage approach heavily dependent on local community resources and assistance. A local community-based youth-serving agency or a school can be enlisted to help with these functions and activities. Probation officers should also emphasize close supervision, particularly for leaders and relatively hardcore or committed youth gang members.

The probation approach should be more complex in cities with chronic gang problems. Special preventive, early intervention, and intensive supervision programs need to be established for different types of gang offenders. The probation officer should help organize and participate in programs at schools where youth who may have been arrested are beginning to participate in gangs. Early intervention programs should be directed to first- or second-time, court-adjudicated gang offenders, mainly those ages 12 to 15. Again, minor gang-affiliated offenders, from 11 to 17 years old, should probably be supervised on the regular probation caseload. An intensive probation gang program should be directed to the more serious gang offender primarily between 15 and 24 years of age with a history of high levels of gang-related criminality and violence. To maintain the integrity of intensive supervision, caseloads should be limited to between 30 and 40 probationers.

A variety of strategies in addition to suppression needs to be implemented by the probation department. Probation officers should provide youth gang probationers and their parents with social assistance in crisis situations, making sure that counseling services are accessible to both. Probation assistance needs to focus on task-centered objectives for the probationer, such as improving school performance, procuring employment, and avoiding criminal gang situations. Of particular importance also are community mobilization efforts to motivate community-based agencies and grassroots organizations to provide more attention and services to youth gang members as well as to better coordinate programs for these youth across agencies. New organizational arrangements may be required to carry out the above strategies, including vertical case management, flexible work shifts, contacts with probationers on the streets and in their homes, decentralized probation offices, and outreach suppression efforts such as ride-alongs with the police.

Where chronic gang problems exist, consideration should be given to the development of special alternative schools for juveniles on probation in cooperation with the school system and community-based youth agencies. These alternative schools could serve as bases for a comprehensive case management approach in

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which probationers receive intensive remedial education under close supervision. Cooperation will be necessary with agencies that provide mental health, drug treatment, parent counseling, and apprenticeship civilian conservation corps type programs. In order to minimize stigmatization, youth should be transferred back to regular school programs after 6 to 12 months.

The chief probation officer needs to pay attention to training of officers, especially in areas with an emerging gang problem where resources are limited and special units are not likely to be established. Outside expertise should be brought in to educate personnel in such gang-related topics as gang-member drug use and trafficking, the influence of street and prison gangs, search and seizure procedures, gang-related social investigation and supervision skills, effective case planning, crisis intervention and mediation skills, handling gang-related information in court, and community mobilization techniques.

Finally, gang probation processes and outcomes need to be evaluated. The content of probation officer case reports, especially presentence investigations, should be analyzed on a regular basis. The extent to which probation officers are enforcing special conditions ordered for gang probationers should be assessed. The effectiveness of services for different types of youth gang members should be evaluated. Long-term outcomes should be determined including recidivism rates, particularly for different types of probation and for the more serious youth gang offenders.

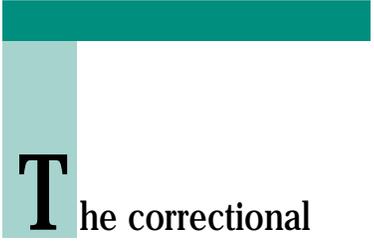
## Corrections

Youth gang problems have grown more serious in correctional settings, including detention centers, jails, correctional institutions, and prisons. In some institutions, gang problems are just emerging. In chronic problem settings, youth gangs are responsible for high levels of contraband activity, including drug distribution, violence against staff and inmates, and the regulation of crime between the correctional setting and the community.

The correctional institution is especially vulnerable to internal disruption by gang members, who make heavy demands on the resources of the facilities to which they are confined. Because of serious crowding in prisons, the lack of organizational resources, and the use of a limited number of strategies, the gang problem in institutions has intensified in recent years.

Four conflicting goals of the correctional mission as they pertain to youth gang inmates must be resolved:

- Stable control of institutional operations.
- Separation of gang offenders from the community.
- Care and development of the physical, social, and mental well-being of inmates during their stay in the institution.
- Preparation of gang inmates for noncriminal behavior upon their reentry into the community.



**T**he correctional institution is especially vulnerable to internal disruption by gang members.

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**T**he more serious the problem, the more formal the policies should be.

Stable control of operations requires preventing and controlling youth gang violence; weakening gang organization and solidarity; reducing the ability of youth gangs to participate in crimes that transcend the boundaries of the institution into the community; and helping gang-member inmates learn correctional social values and behaviors as they prepare for their return to the community. Essential to achieving these goals are an accurate assessment of the gang problem in the institutional setting, particularly whether it is emerging or chronic, and the development of an intelligence system to identify ongoing gang activities. This knowledge should enhance the institution's ability to anticipate, prevent, and control problems proactively rather than rely on defensive or reactive modes of suppression and intervention.

Of special importance is the development of gang policies that differentiate gang and nongang behaviors and their seriousness for particular correctional programs. The more serious the problem, the more formal and specific the policies should be. Policies should define those gang behaviors that are inappropriate for work, educational, and training programs, and visitation and communication privileges. Furthermore, policies that specify distinctions between gang and nongang behavior must be fair. They should meet legal requirements for nondiscriminatory and humane treatment of inmates.

A community mobilization strategy requires that a network of program relationships be established with outside organizations and groups to support and reinforce the work of the institution as well as that of community agencies and groups in the control and rehabilitation of youth gang members.

The correctional institution and the community should be viewed as a contiguous environment. A key function of community networking, especially with the police, should be to share intelligence on a continuing basis about related and sometimes interdependent gang problems in the correctional facility and the community. This could include collaborative case assessment and planning by correctional and police officers. To the extent possible, in particular institutions, inmates should participate in the legitimate development of a productive corrections environment.

The correctional authority's opportunities provision and social intervention strategies should emphasize programs and services of remedial education, training, and jobs, both during the gang member's incarceration and subsequent transition back to the community. Differential programming for gang members will be required, depending on age, capacity, interest, and nature of commitment to gang values. Crisis intervention, counseling, values reeducation, and other services should also be available to assist gang inmates with a range of personal, social, and correctional adaptation problems, including housing, medical, legal, school, and work, as well as relationships with other gang and nongang peers.

Preventive suppression and intervention that anticipates problems should be given priority. This may include frequent and irregularly scheduled inspections of gang member living areas or cells; enhanced supervision of places with high potential for gang problems; housing gang members separately from nongang inmates; dispersal of problem gang members among several correctional facilities; and isolating or transferring gang leaders to other facilities.

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Gang suppression in correctional settings should encourage the creation of a social climate conducive to conventional behaviors, values, and patterns of thinking. The acceptance by inmates of the moral legitimacy of suppression procedures can be fostered through a comprehensive, well-articulated set of policies based on an appropriate mix of opportunities provision, organizational development, social intervention, and community mobilization strategies. In other words, measures of suppression should not only be fair but part of a comprehensive program that contributes to normative and conventional learning by gang members.

Corrections staff should be provided with training that enables them to recognize gang patterns and understand and develop skills in suppression and intervention methods, including how to deal with gang crises. Staff, including security, administration, treatment, and other personnel should receive gang awareness and crisis simulated practice training. Staff need to become knowledgeable of and sensitive to the variety of cultural differences among gang inmates. Recruitment of a racially and ethnically diverse staff is essential. Extensive research should be conducted into the nature of the gang problem in particular correctional institutions. This requires an evaluation of different approaches and of those conditions of correctional housing, staffing, and specific programming that produce effective results in contexts where gang problems are chronic or emerging.

## Parole

Parole supervision of youth gang members is more complicated than supervision of nongang youth because of the pressures of gang solidarity and coercion exerted on the youth. Paroled youth gang members may come under severe pressure to become reinvolved with gangs. Youth gangs provide support for and access to criminal means that gang parolees need to survive, inasmuch as most are resource poor upon release from the correctional institution. The pressures to return to gang violence and criminal behavior are particularly strong in communities with chronic gang problems.

Parole agencies have two interrelated responsibilities in the supervision of youth paroled from correctional institutions. The primary one is to monitor the behavior of paroled youth to ensure that they meet conditions of their parole. The other is to assist in the development of access to a set of community-based opportunities and services to meet the educational, occupational, social, and residential needs of gang parolees. They require a high degree of surveillance or restriction but also support, since they may naturally tend to reassociate with former criminal gang peers.

Parole agencies usually have to depend on the assistance of community agencies and groups for education, employment, job development, and surveillance to carry out its suppression and intervention mission. It is therefore important that parole officers establish collaborative relationships with appropriate personnel in the justice system, community-based agencies, and grassroots organizations in their particular jurisdictions. Regular as well as crisis meetings with



**P**arole supervision of youth gang members is more complicated than supervision of nongang youth.

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**M**entors can enhance the self-esteem of parolees.

police should be required to examine the progress of youth gang members and collectively deal with the gang-related problems they create.

Many communities lack the rehabilitative resources needed by parolees, such as educational, job training, and placement opportunities, mental health and drug treatment, and community residential facilities. A resource provision strategy may be necessary to mitigate some of these deficits in local community resources. They include provision of departmental funds to community agencies to establish specialized programs for parolees, such as residential placements and group homes; or contracting with private homes on behalf of youth gang parolees.

The community must mobilize community-based agencies and businesses to obtain meaningful jobs for youth gang members. Cities with chronic gang problems should use community job development agencies or create a job resource unit within parole that focuses on the needs of youth gang parolees. Cooperatively funded initiatives with certain businesses or industries to train and employ gang parolees should also be established.

A combined social opportunities and social intervention strategy should make use of volunteer mentors who can assist as tutors or supportive mentors to remind youth gang members of what they are supposed to do. Neighborhood mentors can offer one-on-one technical assistance to youth. Through personalized involvement, mentors can enhance the self-esteem of parolees and exert pressure on them to pursue learning, job training, work objectives, and parole obligations.

Nevertheless, suppression must be the key underlying strategy of the parole officer. The degree of supervision should depend on the level of risk the youth gang parolee represents to the safety of the community. The risk assessment will be conditioned by the orders of the parole authority, including the length of time the youth is to remain in parole status and the restrictive conditions mandated. Of special use may be gradual release programs in which furloughs are arranged under supervision of the parole officer prior to official release from the correctional institution. During such release, prospective parolees should be expected to locate housing, interview for jobs, and seek admission to special training and educational programs. Reorientation to family and community responsibilities should also be facilitated.

Some gang members from communities with chronic gang problems may benefit by moving to other communities. This is useful for those who wish to avoid reinvolvement in the gang or who would experience intense pressures from their old gang peers or problems from opposing gang members. These youth require special residential placement, supervision, and support. However, placement in a new community may be a problematic solution if gang problems are present. In this situation, the parole officer should be prepared to help community agencies recognize the problem and react appropriately to it.

A step-down program may be useful in providing gang parolees with supervised group-home or community residential facilities and a continuum of program services and constraints, ranging from around-the-clock institutional to self-

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supervision. Initially, the program should provide program youth with structure and controls for as much of their day as possible to prevent them from becoming reacquainted with former criminal gang associates and engaging in criminal gang activity. The program should involve serious gang offenders in intensive socialization and skill development activities.

Training for the parole officer with youth gang members should involve the development of information about gang behavior and community resources, and also understanding about how to work in gang neighborhoods. Staff have to learn how to recognize and deal with a variety of problems, including lack of agency program resources, community agency hostility, institutional racism, and the politics of the gang-related problems. Joint training with other justice system and community-based agency personnel should be developed to foster mutual understanding and interagency relationships.

Systematic and regular evaluation of parole programs is required to determine whether youth gang members continue to commit offenses, especially gang-related offenses, after release from corrections. Such evaluation should be useful in identifying the successful elements of a parole program directed to gang members. Adequate information about special gang parolee programs and their results can also be used to maintain political support and defend gang parole programs against attack when some parolees get into serious trouble.

## Schools

Gang problems in schools often originate in the streets. Students who are gang members bring with them destructive gang attitudes and behaviors. They claim the school as their turf; they deface the school with graffiti; and they exert control through intimidation and assault on other students. The school, however, may bear some responsibility. Most gang members are bored with and feel inadequate in class. Consequently, they drop out of school as soon as possible. They develop poor learning skills and experience academic and social failure at school from an early age. They have little identification with teachers or staff, whom they may distrust and dislike intensely.

The school's approach to addressing gang-related problems requires recognition of this existence. Its extent and seriousness must be openly and systematically assessed. If the disruptive behavior is gang motivated, the school needs to identify the youth and gangs involved, and if they hang out in or outside the school, the school staff, parents, the community, and the justice system need to reach a consensus about the nature and scope of the problem that affects the school. The problem can be assessed as emerging when a few youth are involved and only minor gang-related activities occur within the school or immediately outside. The problem should be regarded as chronic when gang violence and gang-motivated crime are serious and sustained and affect classroom activities.

While there are limits to what the schools can do in regard to basic family and community factors that significantly contribute to the youth gang problem, there is much that schools can do in conjunction with community agencies and



**S**tudents who are gang members claim the school as their turf.

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**G**ang-prone youth should be introduced at an early age to the world of work, education, and responsibility.

groups. A special school community council should be formed to focus on the problem. A team of local school administrators and agency personnel should create a pattern of coordinated security, learning opportunities, and service arrangements directed to gang members and youth prone to gangs. In communities and schools with chronic gang problems, the school should form a broad coalition with criminal justice and community-based agencies, grassroots organizations, churches, business, and citizen groups. Hardcore gang members and youth less involved in gangs should be identified and appropriately targeted for special remedial education, support services, and supervision.

The objectives of the school's approach to the problem should be delivery of a flexible curriculum targeted to youth gang members who are not doing well in their classes. Such youth should receive enriched programs so that they are provided with basic academic and work-related problem-solving tools. Gang-prone and gang-member youth should be introduced at an early age to the world of work, education, and community responsibility. For older youth gang members, job apprentice and remedial educational objectives have to be adequately linked to career development.

In their efforts to enhance the academic and vocational achievement of youth gang members, teachers should not emphasize performance standards to the exclusion of the nature and quality of the learning process. The gang member's achievement in class or on a work project should be advertised and rewarded. The teacher's positive, personalized relationship with youth gang members is important and can serve to reduce violence and disruptive acts. Support staff, including social workers, coaches, tutors, psychologists, security personnel, community agency professionals, parents, and even community residents can supplement the teacher's efforts. The school principal's leadership is critical to the development of a school-community support system that combines extra social support with social controls for members of youth gangs while protecting nongang youth and maintaining the academic integrity of the school's program.

There are at least three components to a school's effective control or suppression strategy:

- The development of a school gang code, with guidelines specifying an appropriate response by teachers and staff to different kinds of gang behavior, including a mechanism for dealing with serious gang delinquency.
- The application of these rules and regulations within a context of positive relationships and open communication by school personnel with parents, community agencies, and students.
- A clear distinction between gang- and nongang-related activity so as not to exaggerate the scope of the problem.

The school needs to involve parents of gang and nongang youth in the school's concerns and activities in respect to the gang problem. As many parents as possible should be engaged in parent-group meetings, street patrols, monitoring student activities in and out of school to detect and prevent gang activities, and assisting teachers and staff to carry out class and field trip activities. The school

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should develop parenting and gang awareness classes. Parents who have successfully dealt with children who have become involved in gangs may be especially useful in various gang-prevention and control activities, including visiting and counseling parents whose children are currently causing gang problems in school.

The school should establish close relationships with outside organizations and agencies that have knowledge about the problem and can provide services to deal with it. Police, probation, and youth agencies have valuable information about youth gangs and how to deal with them. The school can be used as a community base or center for a whole range of protective, preventive, and remedial health, education, training, and employment services for students and their parents, including focus on the needs of youth gang members. In any case, the school must not simply act as a host to other organizations. It must exercise leadership in rearranging its own structure and providing activities to address the youth gang problem.

Special training opportunities should be provided to school administrators, teachers, and staff to increase their knowledge of gangs and community resources in regard to the problem. Individual and group counseling skills, especially for handling gang crisis situations, should be developed. A key concern of training should be the development of ways to enhance both self-esteem and self-discipline of youth gang members. Gathering and sharing information on gangs are extremely important tasks in the development of an information system to identify, track, investigate, suppress, and assist gang members. Nevertheless, these records can be abused if they serve to exclude gang members from school, subject them to harassment, or violate student rights and privileges. Appropriate procedures for sharing school information with other agencies should be carefully worked out.

School officials should conduct periodic evaluation to determine who is being classified as a gang member and for what behaviors; what services or special treatment such students receive; and what benefits and costs result from the special programs established. Benefits should include improvement in academic achievement by youth gang members and nonmembers, reduction of gang and nongang delinquent behavior, and success in keeping students, especially those who belong to gangs, in school.

## **Youth employment**

No significant national policies or programs have been established to deal specifically with the employment problems of inner-city gang or gang-prone youth. Available reports suggest these youth have the highest rates for dropping out of or failing school and the least appropriate employment skills and work attitudes. They are responsible for the highest rates of serious criminal and violent behavior. They have not only resisted training and rehabilitation, but have also been consistently ignored or excluded from available special education, training, and work programs. Much street activity, including an increasing proportion of gang activity, may serve as a form of self-employment that fills part of the vacuum



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**T**he goal of an employment program for gang members must be the development of entry-level jobs that lead to career development.

created by depressed levels of unemployment and underemployment, particularly among African-American and Latino youth.

Social, economic, job development, and training programs for low-income and socially marginal youth, including youth gang members, need to be developed and expanded. Employment, education, criminal justice, and community-based youth agencies must become interrelated components of an approach that attempts to integrate gang members into society, particularly in communities with chronic gang problems. The goal of an employment program for gang members that results in a reduction of gang crime must be the development of entry-level jobs that lead to career development. There are two critical points in the youth gang member's development that should be addressed: (1) during the early teen years just prior to the time when the youth develops a serious commitment to gang life; and (2) during the late adolescent period, when the youth no longer sees the benefits of hanging out with the gang and recognizes the related risks of long-term imprisonment, injury, and death.

A new employment or related social service institution is required, especially in communities with chronic gang problems, to provide adequate links between schools and jobs and to establish specific steps by which marginal youth, especially those from gangs, can enter the legitimate job market. This institution should target gang members through a program that incorporates job opportunities, social control, and support. The program would require not only job development, remedial education, social services, and supervision, including the involvement of criminal justice agencies, but also monitoring of gang members by community-based groups to ensure their social development and rehabilitation, and to protect the community.

The new institution should have three components: (1) a program for older dropouts and other socially disadvantaged youth ages 16 to 24, (2) a program for marginal gang members ages 15 to 18 who are still at school, and (3) a program for hardcore gang members 14 to 16 years old who are early dropouts. Referrals would come primarily from criminal justice authorities, particularly probation and parole. The priority program in communities with chronic gang problems should focus on dropouts ages 16 to 24 and include remedial education, training, job placement, or employment and career development in close cooperation with business and industry. The priority program in communities in which gang problems are emerging should focus on marginal gang members ages 15 to 18 and would require a less complex set of component programs. In any case, each program should be of sufficient length and focus to meet the interests and needs of the particular category of youth.

A major concern of the new program should be the creation of a job bank. A job development specialist should be hired to obtain commitments from both private and public employers to employ graduates and others who have gone through the program. A key proposition to be tested should be that youth gang members can relinquish their roles in gangs to become hard-working, loyal, and productive workers. A job bank should draw from a variety of occupations. Success will be largely dependent on placing the youth in the "right" job at the right point in his development of appropriate work attitudes and skills. Appropriate work shifts and transportation arrangements should be developed.

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An important consideration in preparing the gang member for entry into a job is work acclimation. The youth gang members may like the idea of a job but not necessarily understand what holding a job means. The youth must learn not to take on the job inappropriate attitudes and skills learned on the streets and in correctional institutions. He or she needs to develop a belief that a legitimate job can be rewarding. After the gang member develops an interest and attitudinal readiness for a job through both observation and didactic experiences, he or she needs to develop academic and vocational problem-solving skills. Assessment of the educational needs of each youth is important for the creation of appropriate group and individualized remedial skills programs. Each youth must also learn to fill out application forms and interview properly for a job.

The youth needs to enter the job market and establish a work record. Many youth gang members in their first legitimate job experience create problems, are fired, or quit at the slightest pretext. It is at this time that followup and supportive services may be especially important. The youth must be persuaded that a career ladder exists and that it is possible to move through a series of legitimate jobs and training experiences which will ultimately result in successful employment that is more rewarding than life with a street gang.

A series of social supports and controls should be established for the youth gang member in this career development process, particularly in the community with chronic gang-related problems. Employers and supervisory personnel should be oriented to the needs of the youth. Mentors, whether volunteer or paid, relatives, close friends, and neighbors should be involved in the training and work-support process. Probation and parole officers should be continually engaged in close supervision of the gang member as he or she faces obstacles to adapting to the work situation. Only under the most extreme circumstances, such as commission of a felony, should the youth be considered for termination from the program.

Employment services for serious gang offenders, as part of a comprehensive suppression and intervention program, will be very costly, particularly in terms of the variety of skilled staff and the intensity of services required. Teachers or remedial education specialists, job trainers, employment placement specialists, and advocates will need to have advanced training in their own specialties and an ability to relate to and understand how to provide services to aggressive, easily frustrated gang members. The roles of professionals and paraprofessionals, including those who come from the neighborhood and even former gang members, will have to be carefully developed and their interrelationships specified. Different kinds of organizations, including schools, employers, criminal justice and community-based agencies, community groups, and residents, must assume varying and complementary responsibilities depending on local community resources, the nature of the gang program, and the purpose and scope of the particular program component.

Of special importance should be a formative evaluation during the initial phase of the development of these innovative gang-oriented employment programs. Evaluators must help administrators of the programs articulate objectives and assess the relationship of specific program activities and processes to program purposes. From the start, careful documentation should be required for



**T**he youth must be persuaded that jobs and training will result in employment that is more rewarding than life with a street gang.

**Y**outh on the street not yet involved in existing agency programs often constitute a recruiting pool for gang membership.

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organizational and interorganizational procedures, program problems and changes, and whether youth continue in their criminal gang patterns. Long-term evaluation of program processes and gang-member employment and recidivism patterns should be considered.

## **Community-based youth agency**

An essential component of a broad-scale approach to the youth gang problem is a local community-based youth agency (CBYA) to provide a continuum of services to gang and gang-prone youth. Proposed is a six-fold mission for those youth agencies intending to serve youth gang members: socialization, education, family support, training and employment, social control, and community mobilization and agency coordination. This mission must target and serve different types of youth gang members, their families, and their communities in different ways. This variation is largely related to degrees of poverty and social and personal disorganization, particularly as represented in communities with emerging and chronic gang problems.

The CBYA program should target a different mix of youth in these communities. Relatively more youth prone to gangs should be targeted in communities with emerging problems; relatively more committed and adjudicated gang members should be targeted in localities with chronic gang problems to reflect the wider scope and more serious nature of the problem. The CBYA needs to assist and supplement services and approaches of key institutions, such as family, school, employment, and criminal justice agencies. To achieve a reduction in the gang problem, the CBYA must therefore not only work directly with gang members but assist in strengthening primary social institutions and increase local community capacity to address its youth gang problem.

**Socialization.** Of primary importance in contexts with emerging gang problems is the ability of the CBYA worker to reach out to youth on the street not yet involved in existing agency programs. Such youth often constitute a recruiting pool for gang membership. Special efforts should also be made to change the style and content of existing programs to meet the interests and needs of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups new to the community. In the course of many of these activities, it is important for the CBYA worker not to become an inadvertent focus for binding a loosely knit youth group into a cohesive criminal gang. The CBYA worker should be skilled in helping gang-prone youth or youth gang members learn conflict resolution skills, especially those that contribute to a reduction of intergroup conflict. Team sports and social activities may be important, especially when they involve parents and local residents as role models and agents of social control, but also when they facilitate relationships that allow the CBYA worker to address gang members' more difficult problems of social development and control.

**Education.** The major networking and social intervention objectives of administrators and teachers working with gang-prone youth ages 12 to 16 should be to meet the educational and social needs of these vulnerable yet troublesome youth. Their primary task should be to help youth improve their performance at school and at the same time curb or limit their actual or potentially disruptive

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gang-related behavior. The CBYA worker should join the school team, supplementing the teachers' activities both in and outside the school. If older youth gang members are quitting school, the CBYA should work directly with school administrators to establish alternative school programs and special skill and general equivalency diploma (GED) centers. CBYA workers should collaborate with teachers, parents, and community volunteers teaching and supervising these youth.

**Family support.** Parents of youth gang members are often burdened with their own personal, social, and economic problems. These parents are often very difficult to reach and counsel effectively. A persistent long-term outreach support effort by the CBYA in cooperation with other agencies must be initiated when appropriate. The CBYA worker can aid parents of gang members by having them meet together to share problems of parenting and supervising their gang offspring. These groups can also become mutual-aid or crisis-intervention groups when gang conflict threatens or flares up. Youth gang members must be assisted if they need to leave, at least temporarily, disorganized family situations. The CBYA worker should work closely with the child welfare agency and the court as well as the youth and his family when this process is undertaken.

**Training and employment.** The CBYA worker can assist schools, community organizations, and employers to prepare youth for employment at the CBYA facility. The CBYA should help with referral and support services if programs such as introduction to the world of work and training programs already exist in the community. In some cases, the CBYA can develop small entrepreneurial operations, employing gang members, preferably in collaboration with established businesses. Collaboration with schools in the development of job banks and apprenticeship opportunities may also be necessary. Of special importance is the focus on those gang members in greatest need of basic academic and vocational problem-solving skills and job development services.

**Social control.** The CBYA must learn to accept and take on new roles of deterrence, supervision, and suppression in helping youth gang members and those prone to gangs. In this process, key links with police, probation and parole, and the courts must be developed. Youth gang members and their families should come to view the CBYA worker not only as a helping agent but as a possible link to authoritative or criminal justice agencies that will not hesitate to report gang-related behavior and help with certain activities such as surveillance or patrol. The agency's supervisory or deterrent role should be based on the traditional socialization function of the CBYA to help the individual mature and develop socially within the framework of the conventional values of the neighborhood and a democratic society.

**Community mobilization and agency coordination.** The CBYA in some communities may be ideally situated to observe and articulate the problems and needs of the community, especially those of its youth gang members. The CBYA should then attempt to rally other agencies and community groups to action, especially if the agency has a track record of working with youth gangs and can demonstrate credibility with diverse parts of the community. It may act as a moderating force where others might be inclined to overreact to gang members and their crimes of violence. In communities in which gang



**P**arents of gang members are often burdened with their own problems.

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**G**rassroots organizations should be concerned with the gang problem.

problems are emerging, CBYA's should attempt, particularly in conjunction with schools, to mobilize community efforts to deal with the problem. In communities with chronic gang problems, the role of the CBYA should probably be relatively more closely linked to criminal justice agencies, particularly probation.

CBYA's should be staffed by mature individuals—professionals and neighborhood residents—who are strongly motivated to serve and have the capacity and skills to work with gang members and with community group and organizational representatives. Training efforts should focus not only on work with youth gang members but on the integration of CBYA services with those of other agencies, especially criminal justice and grassroots organizations. The broad-scale approach of the CBYA to the youth gang problem should be tested in two stages: in the earlier period to ensure that specific objectives, services, and processes are properly developed; and in the later outcome stage to determine whether specific strategies and programs do indeed lead to a lowering of the gang crime rate.

## **Grassroots organizations**

The grassroots organization is a traditional American response to a range of problems that affect the local community's welfare and development. Such associations or organizations are based on citizen concern and can be used not only to mobilize local energy and resources but to compel outside interest and concern, usually by government. In most cases these organizations closely identify with a specific population. They emphasize local citizen participation. Grassroots organizations can play a significant role in the control of gang crime. These organizations include block clubs, neighborhood improvement associations, tenant organizations, parents or mothers groups, citizen patrols, local business, fraternal and other civic organizations, churches and church-sponsored groups, social agencies, political organizations and activists, and multifunctional community organizations.

Grassroots organizations should be concerned, directly or indirectly, with the gang problem in their communities, often the tip of a more complex set of serious local concerns. The local organization serves to connect the individual citizen, family, and even gang members with the norms, values, and resources of the larger society. The grassroots organization should pursue a variety of strategies toward stimulating and integrating citizen and community efforts to resolve the gang problem. Specifically, the key strategies should be a mix of community mobilization, organizational development, and suppression.

Community mobilization may be viewed as a strategy uniquely fitted to the interests and capacities of the grassroots organization. A key objective should be to develop clear and reliable information about the gang problem. The organization has to be aggressive in its efforts to gather data, interpret the problem, and determine what should be done. While the organization should conduct or participate in a series of community meetings to assess and plan programs to deal with the problem in collaborative interagency terms, it must also take

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proactive leadership in influencing certain key authorities to see the moral and political necessity of addressing the problem with meaningful and programmatic policy.

While the grassroots organization may contribute to collaborative programs, it may also need to challenge public and nonprofit agencies over issues of racism, agency corruption, staff incompetence, and lack of resources, which contribute to the failure to resolve the gang problem. Some of the tactics of these organizations can arouse citizen and agency feelings and reactions. They may cut through citizen apathy and agency routine. Most important they can be useful in stimulating community participation and the development of constructive policies and programs to deal with specific gang situations.

A variety of mechanisms, techniques, and direct actions are available to the grassroots organization to affect change in established organizational policy and programs, and to hold the organization accountable for performance of mandated or agreed-upon functions. The community organization should facilitate the development of interagency task forces, coordinating councils, and advisory committees containing a range of criminal justice and community-based agencies as well as citizen groups. The special mission of the grassroots organization should be to use these broader community councils to educate and persuade agencies to actively, intelligently, and beneficially resolve the problem on behalf of the local community. The grassroots organization will need to monitor and test continually the value of agency programs that result from these communitywide, interagency associations.

One important consequence of community mobilization and special local organizational arrangements to address the youth gang problem should be the development of local citizen leadership. A variety of organizing and management skills can be learned, such as how to efficiently marshal pickets or persuade local legislators to vote for or against a particular gang-related measure, how to conduct meetings or interagency negotiations, and how to develop cooperative community group and agency agreements in regard to gang programs.

The neighborhood organization is in a uniquely advantageous position to mobilize formal authority as well as direct local citizen or street-level controls over youth gang members. Because of its contacts with official agents of control, particularly police and other justice system representatives, and its knowledge of community, the neighborhood or local grassroots organization should be especially effective in targeting and controlling particular gangs and youth gang members. While local citizens should sometimes be mobilized for direct defensive and offensive activities against gangs, these efforts should be planned and carried out in cooperation with established or official authorities; for example, in collaboration with the local police, probation, or community-based youth agencies. Local parents, residents, and former youth gang members, collectively or individually, are useful in persuading and counseling gang members to cease their violent activities.

The needs for training of staff and volunteers in grassroots, gang-related projects can be extensive depending on the particular tasks required. Special workshop and short-term training conferences should be directed to such issues



**A**n important consequence of community mobilization is the development of local leadership.

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**A** primary research consideration is the measurement of the community's capacity to mobilize.

as the genesis of specific community gang problems and the extent to which particular community conditions contribute to the problem. Techniques for working with gang members, their parents, and community agencies addressing the problem should be developed.

To determine the effectiveness of grassroots projects dealing with the youth gang problem, the numbers of people who participate in such projects and the extent to which community actions are associated with a decline or change in the character of the problem need to be assessed. Although a full-scale evaluation of the grassroots organization's contribution to the control of gang crime is probably not possible without a variety of community comparisons and careful research controls, valuable insights for planning future community gang-control programs can be obtained by documenting their organization and effectiveness in reducing gang crime. A primary research consideration is the measurement of the community's capacity to mobilize itself and construct a mechanism to address the problem.

# Researchers Planners Policymakers



More detailed information about this study and issues surrounding youth gangs is available through the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse.

The full 195-page report *Gang Suppression and Intervention: An Assessment* discusses in detail the study's findings and its design and research methodologies. The full report is useful for conducting further research, making planning decisions, or drafting policy.

For your copy of the full report, complete and return the order form below with your payment. A companion research summary *Gang Suppression and Intervention: Problem and Response* is also available.

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