



American Prosecutors
Research Institute

*Prosecutor's
Comprehensive
Gang Response
Model*

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INTRODUCTION

The gang problem in the United States has grown increasingly complex over the decades despite the vast amount of research that has been done in an attempt to understand how gangs form, what sustains them, and recommendations as to how communities can address gang problems. Part of the difficulty in addressing gangs lies in knowing what exactly a gang is. Is a gang a group of teenagers who wear the same color of clothing and sports apparel? Is a gang an organized group that sells drugs? Is a gang a group of three or more people who hang out on the same street corner each day? Is a gang a couple of teenagers who commit vandalism and place graffiti in the neighborhood?

Another difficulty is identifying what constitutes gang activity. Are gangs only involved in drug sales? Are gangs responsible for organized retail crime? Do gangs extort money and services from neighborhood residents and businesses? Is the killing of a young man by two others who have been known to hang out in a specific part of the community gang-related?

Most large, urban communities have a variety of gang prevention and intervention programs that are offered by many different types of organizations such as schools, law enforcement, health/mental health providers, faith-based groups, and non-profit community-based organizations. In suburban and rural areas, these types of programs may not exist, and perhaps more importantly, regardless of whether the community experiencing the gang problem is urban, suburban, or rural, few have significant involvement by local prosecutors.

Historically, prosecutors and legislators have responded to emerging and existing gang problems through intervention programs and suppression initiatives including intensive prosecution and increased penalties for gang crimes. There is, however, a bigger, more comprehensive role that prosecutors can undertake. Increasingly, prosecutors have moved away from the more traditional role of case processor to be more proactive in working to address crime problems. Prosecutors across the country have either implemented or played an integral role in a variety of prevention

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and intervention efforts aimed at reducing both serious, violent crimes and quality-of-life crimes. Drug courts and drug treatment, mental health courts, community courts, nuisance abatement, civil injunctions, truancy programs, and reentry initiatives are available in many prosecutors' offices. Thus, it stands to reason that prosecutors can serve as leaders in working to resolve gang problems.

With funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the National District Attorneys Association's American Prosecutors Research Institute initiated an effort to help prosecutors formulate a comprehensive response to gang problems in their communities. The Prosecutor's Comprehensive Gang Response Model, presented in this monograph, is the result of a three-day symposium in which experts from the fields of prosecution, policing, juvenile justice, state and local government, schools, community-based organizations, faith-based groups and researchers convened to discuss successful approaches in gang prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry.

OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL

The comprehensive gang response model is designed to help prosecutors and allied professionals design and implement gang initiatives that focus on the specific needs of individual jurisdictions. Drawing on the experiences of experts from various disciplines across the country and available research on what works in gang prevention, intervention, and suppression, the model consists of seven major components:

1. Assessment: a systematic effort to understand the nature of the gang problem in a jurisdiction and to identify the resources available to address the problem
2. Mechanisms for action: systems and approaches for responding to the gang problem
3. Organizational change: types of institutional and staffing changes that may be necessary to create a comprehensive response to the gang problem
4. Collaboration: working together with a variety of stakeholders to ensure a holistic and interactive approach, eliminate duplication of effort, and increase information sharing
5. Community outreach/mobilization of social intervention and social development opportunity resources: involvement of the community and community-based organizations in the prevention of and intervention prior to gang crimes and reintegration of formerly incarcerated gang members
6. Multidisciplinary interactive programming: use of tested multi-agency collaborative programs to prevent, intervene with, and suppress gang activity
7. Evaluation: use of research tools to objectively measure the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the gang response

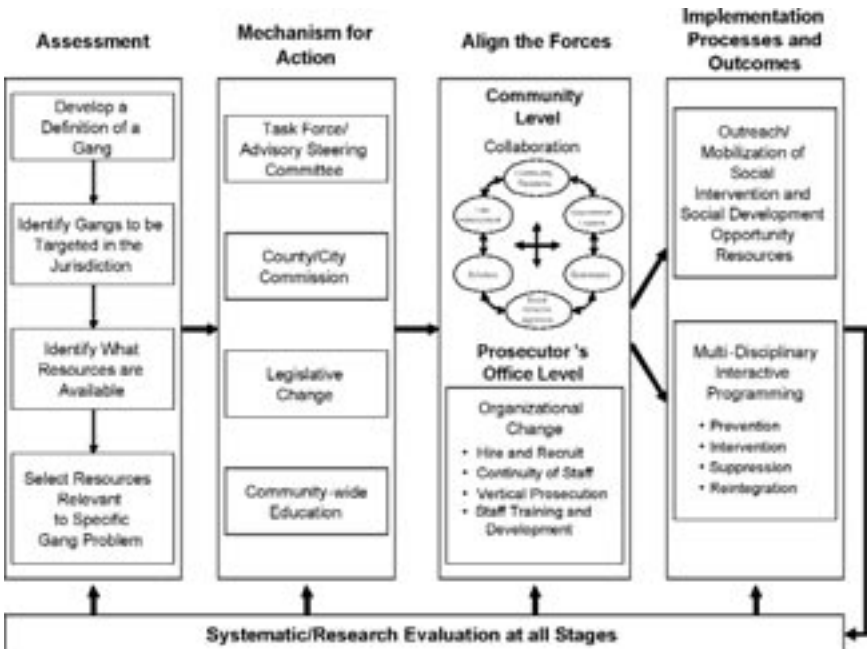
The model depicted graphically in Exhibit 1 is intended to be used as a strategic guide for creating responses to gang activity that target the varied and often related types of gang problems a jurisdiction may face. For example, in one area, the gang may be mainly operating for economic reasons whereas in another a gang may be territorial, protecting its “turf.”

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Each of these gangs will have a somewhat different *modus operandi*: the economic gang will likely commit crimes more often related to robbery, drugs sales, etc. while the turf-based gang will more likely be involved in quality-of-life or status and vengeful crimes such as graffiti to mark territory or more violent crimes against people (murder, aggravated assault, etc.). Because of these differences, the exact strategies that prosecutors might implement will likely be tailored to the complex characteristics and operations of the different types of gangs.

The seven elements of the model are described in detail in this monograph. Each section provides guidance to prosecutors on the practical steps necessary for planning and implementing gang strategies that are tailored to the varied circumstances of the gang problem, available prosecutorial resources, available governmental and community-based resources, and political and legislative realities. Each section also includes examples of different gang programs involving prosecutors as well as programs that have been found to be effective by researchers.

Exhibit 1. Prosecutor's Comprehensive Gang Response Model



ASSESSMENT

The first step in defining an appropriate, comprehensive gang response is to assess the gang problem and the resources available for addressing it. The assessment consists of several different elements:

1. Know what constitutes a “gang” in your jurisdiction
2. Understand the specific characteristics and circumstances that create the gang problem you are dealing with
3. Identify who/what resources can help address the gang problem

Know What Constitutes a “Gang” in Your Jurisdiction

Everyone knows a gang or gang member when they see one, right? Perhaps the biggest challenge in designing gang strategies that deal with the specific gang problems in a jurisdiction is that there are a number of stereotypes of gangs that have to be broken down. People are either unwilling to admit there is a gang problem because they don’t see the types of gang activity that they expect to see, or people assume that gangs all operate the same way and what works in Walla Walla will work in Sheboygan.

Knowing what a gang is means breaking down the misconceptions and stereotypes about gangs and then defining what a gang is. Despite popular belief, gangs are *not* necessarily:¹

- Highly organized criminal syndicates,
- Racially or ethnically homogenous,
- Just a large city or urban phenomenon,
- Male dominated,
- Organized only around the drug trade, or
- Dressed in “colors” or marked with certain types of tattoos.

¹ Howell, J.C., (2000). Youth Gang Programs and Strategies, National Youth Gang Center, Institute for Intergovernmental Research, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

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This is not to suggest that these stereotypes do not exist at all but rather that the idea of a young male dressed with a blue bandana and a New York Yankees warm-up jacket, with jeans hung low on the hips, standing on the corner in an economically challenged part of the city selling drugs may not be what a gang member looks like in your jurisdiction. Likewise, a well-dressed college educated young woman in her 20s with a skull and crossbones tattoo on her shoulder may indeed be a member of a gang in your jurisdiction.

How a gang member or gang incidence is defined will affect efforts to estimate the prevalence and nature of gang activity in a jurisdiction. So, it is important that careful consideration be given to defining what a gang problem is and consequently how this definition is applicable to the characteristics of gangs in a jurisdiction. Prosecutors define gangs based on their jurisdiction's criminal statutes. This type of definition is required in court when prosecutors are trying to seek justice for individuals who are victims of gang-related crimes. However, when developing a comprehensive gang response model, prosecutors must move outside the courtroom and develop a gang definition that will capture not only the suppression component to gang activity but also prevention and intervention components. Generally, there are two distinct ways of defining gangs:²

- A process-based definition: why and how a gang is formed (community characteristics, number of gang members, organizational structure, recruitment methods) or by
- A delinquency- or crime-based definition: whether or not a group of individuals are involved in more or less serious criminal activities.

Both types of definitions are important in understanding gangs; however, the two definitions are based on two different goals. A causal and process-based definition can provide greater clarity in how to develop prevention and intervention programs that can be utilized to assist youth/adults who are at risk for becoming gang members. The delinquency- or crime-based definition provides the opportunity to identify the nature and level of gang problems in the community and suppress

² Bjerregaard, B. (2002). Self-definitions of gang membership and involvement in delinquent activities. *Youth & Society*, 34 (1), 31-54.

gang activities. We encourage jurisdictions to use a combination of both definition types and criminal gang statutes when formulating their definition of a gang. Doing so will allow for a holistic and balanced approach to address gang activity in jurisdictions.

Provided below are three examples of how process-based and delinquency-based definitions are incorporated into definitions:

The state of California (Cal. Penal code 186.22) uses the following criteria to define a gang:

- A group of three or more (adult or juvenile and male or female);
- In association with each other on a regular or part-time basis;
- With some type of identifier (e.g., a name, symbol, sign, or color); and
- Involved in the commission of specific crimes (felony or misdemeanors, including juveniles).

Chicago Crime Commission defines a gang as:

- A cohesive group,
- Members' ages ranging from 11 to 23 years,
- With a leader and purpose,
- That engages in criminal activities.

Some of the most notable gang researchers, Malcolm Klein and Cheryl Maxson recently defined a gang with minimal characteristics:

A street gang is any durable street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity.³ (p. 4)

All three definitions differ in some way. One definition defines a gang by providing a specific number of individuals who associate with one another. Another provides a specific age of individuals who are involved in a gang. The last definition indicates necessary and sufficient elements. However, all three definitions take into account criminal activity and gang formation.

³ Klein, M. W., & Maxson, C. L. (2006). *Street Gang Patterns and Policies*. NY: Oxford University Press.

The ultimate goal of a gang definition is to create a robust definition that accurately captures the gang-related activity in your jurisdiction. The definition should be continuously reviewed and revised when needed.

Understand the Type of Gang You are Dealing With

As noted earlier, gangs can come in many shapes and sizes. Decades of research have shown that different gangs have different characteristics, especially in major urban areas. A review of gang research found that African American gangs were relatively more involved in drug offenses; Hispanic gangs were associated more frequently with turf-related violence, Asian and White gangs were more likely to engage in property crimes.⁴ The 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment surveyed law enforcement agencies and the overall results indicated that all regions of the U.S. have gangs residing there. The 2005 assessment, in conjunction with other research, has shown that there are differences within as well as between urban, suburban, and rural gangs; national gangs and local, home-grown gangs; street gangs, prison gangs, and motorcycle gangs.⁵

Differences between Local Home-Grown Gangs and National Gangs

Generally speaking, there are two so-called broad types of gangs: (1) home-grown gangs and (2) national gangs. It is important to note that home-grown gangs generally consist of local youth rather than individuals who have migrated from urban areas.⁶ Moreover, research has found that less than 30 percent of law enforcement agencies reported that gang migration contributed to gang activity in their jurisdictions. The results also indicated that home-grown gangs imitate the signs and culture of national gangs in order to gain respect from other local gangs, but these gangs are not necessarily affiliated with national gangs.

National gangs are large-scale gangs that have numerous sections, often not closely related, found in cities throughout the United States and each

⁴ Howell, J. C. (1998) *Youth gang: An overview*. Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

⁵ For more information see BJA 1998, Weisheit and Wells 2004, Klein 2005.

⁶ Weisheit, R. A. & Wells, L. E. (2001). The perception of gangs as a problem in nonmetropolitan areas. *Criminal Justice Review*, 26 (2) 170-192.

section is referred to as a “set” or “clique.” For example, Bandidos, an outlaw motorcycle gang, has 80 chapters located in the U.S. and 152 chapters worldwide. Some of the most notable national gangs are Crips, Bloods, Latin Kings, Gangster Disciples, Vice Lords, 18th Street, Aryan Nation, MS-13, BTK, and Hells Angels. It is also important to keep in mind that sets or cliques of a national gang can have name variations based on its street or geographic location. For example, the Bloods have various clique names such as United Blood National (UBN) and Gangster Killer Bloods, whereas Crips have clique names such as Rolling 60s and Hoover Crips.

Differences between Street-based Gangs and Drug-based Gangs

Another way to categorize gangs is whether they are mainly a “street-based gang” or a “drug-based gang.” Street-based gangs are usually loosely structured gangs that are more concerned with their reputation and geographic territory as compared to drug-based gangs. The central focus of drug-based gangs is on money and drugs. In Klein’s book “*The American Street Gang*,” he provides a laundry list of activities that illustrate the differences between street gangs and drug gangs.⁷

Street Gangs	Drug Gangs
Versatile crime (cafeteria-style)	Crime focused on drug business
Larger structure	Smaller structure
Less cohesive	More cohesive
Code of loyalty	More centralized leadership
Residential territories	Market-defined roles
Members may sell drugs	Requirement of loyalty
Intergang rivalries	Sales market territories
Younger on average, but wider	Members sell drugs
age range	Competition controlled
	Older on average, but narrower
	age range

⁷ Klein, M. W. (1995). *The American Street Gang*. New York: Oxford University.

Other Gang Similarities and Differences

There are several other similarities and differences in gangs, including recruitment methods, gang initiation, and modes of operation.

Recruitment Methods

- Senior gang members usually try to recruit individuals from the neighborhood where the gang hangs out or claims.
- Gangs may recruit youth by threatening their safety or their family members' safety.
- Offering individuals a quick way to make money by performing an illegal activity such as selling drugs.
- Influencing other family members to become gang members thus creating an intergenerational transmission of gang membership.
- Informing individuals that a gang member's life is exciting and pleasurable to potential members.⁸
- Older gang members are even known to hang outside schools to recruit gang members.

Gang Initiation

- Potential members can be "jumped in" or "beat in." This means that gang members surround prospective gang members and severely beat them.
- Another way an individual is invited into a gang is through sponsorship from an established gang member (typically a family member). Sometimes gang membership can span across multiple generations.
- Females can join by one of the previously mentioned initiations or they can be "sexed in." "Sexed in" means that a female must have sexual intercourse with several gang members. This type of initiation places females at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Modes of Operation

- Gangs engage in various modes of operation based on many factors. However, some gangs are similar in some ways but differ in others. For example, two Hispanic gangs might use the same tagging symbols, but the two gangs might not be affiliated with one another.

⁸ Carlie, M. (2002). *Into the abyss: A personal journey into the world of street gangs*.

- Not all gangs engage in similar criminal activities. Criminal activities can differ for gangs from city to city depending upon the resources within jurisdictions.
- Gangs are more likely to commit crimes within their own neighborhoods.

Identify Who/What Resources Can Help Address the Gang Problem

Once the definition of a gang is established and the type of gang problem that exists in a community has been determined, the next step is to identify resources in the community that will help address the gang problem.

Identifying resources, or conducting a resource assessment, involves two steps:

- Determining which agencies and organizations in the community might have an interest in addressing gang problems or may already be working to address the issue
- Assessing the services being provided by the identified agencies and organizations to determine if the certain services, controls, or opportunities would help address the identified gang problems

There are many agencies, organizations, and individuals who may have an interest in working with the prosecutor's office to address gang problems or may already be providing services or controls that would help address the gang problem. In conducting the resource assessment, it is important to think outside the box and look at both traditional and non-traditional partners. Exhibit 2 provides some of the agencies and organizations that might be relevant.

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Exhibit 2. Potential Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals

Mayor's Office	Resident/Tenant/Homeowner Associations
Code Enforcement Agencies	Community-based Advocacy Groups
Health and Human Services	Youth Groups
Child Welfare Agencies/Child Protective Services	Media Outlets (both mainstream and secondary)
Police and Sheriff's Departments	Businesses, Merchants, Business Associations
Probation and Parole Departments	Universities and Local Colleges
Corrections Departments	Professional and Semi-Professional Sports Teams
Housing Agencies	Neighborhood Residents
Schools	Former (now adult) Gang Members
Hospitals	
Faith Community	

Once service organizations have been identified there are several questions one should ask to assess whether or not the organization's services would be helpful in addressing the gang problem:

1. What are the objectives of the services?
2. How are the services delivered?
3. What geographic areas are served?
4. To whom are services provided?
5. When are the services provided?
6. What does it cost and who pays for it?
7. Do the organizations serve or would they serve gang members?⁹
8. How committed are leaders and staff to comprehensively addressing the gang problem?

Answers to these questions can help identify which organizations would be best suited for helping your office respond to the gang problem.

⁹The Education Development Center Web site located at <http://www.edc.org>, accessed on March 3, 2007.

MECHANISM FOR ACTION

There are several different mechanisms for action that prosecutors can take in response to gang problems. Four of particular interest are creating or working with a task force; creating or participating in county/city commissions; advocating for legislative changes; and educating prosecutors, judges, and parents on gang responses.

Task Forces

Creating and working with a task force can bring forth positive results when responding to gangs in a community. A task force can also create a united front against gangs by creating a universal set of goals and objectives on how to respond to gangs by bringing together individuals from different agencies. A task force helps agencies “share the burden” by pooling either people or monies to address an issue. For example, the Safe Streets Task Force in Marion County, Indiana, created to respond to gang problems, is made up of officials from the Marion County Prosecutor’s Office, Indianapolis Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and other law enforcement from adjoining counties.¹⁰ The goal of the task force is to identify and lower gang-related activity in the city of Indianapolis. The task force takes part in investigating and prosecuting individuals who commit crimes such as homicide, felonious assault, weapons violations, drug trafficking, etc. Task forces can also include community agencies, citizens, victims, and former gang members. Multiple perspectives on a task force can increase intelligence sharing and thus create better ways to respond to gang activity.

Another example of a task force is the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, a multi-discipline and multi-jurisdictional partnership to interdict and disrupt gang activity in Northern Virginia. The members of the task force include the chief law enforcement executives from each

¹⁰ Further information on the Marion County task force can be found at <http://www.indygov.org/eGov/IMPID/Enforcement/Investigations/safe-streets.htm>

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jurisdiction and state and federal law enforcement partners representing enforcement efforts. Court service unit directors and regional coordinators represent prevention/intervention efforts. Five regional gang task force coordinators provide a point of contact for gang-related intervention/prevention programs and plans. Collaboration between individuals occur among the courts, social service agencies, local governments, the schools, non-profit and faith-based organizations, businesses and families to counteract the influence of gangs. The goals of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force are based on a model from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and encompass a collaborative gang prevention effort focused on enforcement, education, and intervention/prevention.

The task force has undertaken a regional gang assessment to determine the scope of the problem. The assessment will provide the community with a bigger and better picture of the gang hot spots in the region. This assessment will provide a road map and strategies for action. The Northern Virginia Regional Commission is working diligently with the five coordinators, former gang members, and community leaders to produce a Northern Virginia Regional Gang Assessment in September 2007.

The five coordinators have also taken part in implementing an Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) position in each jurisdiction that falls under the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force. The Center for Multicultural Human Services offers gang prevention and intervention services free of charge to youth aged 12-21 throughout Northern Virginia including Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County.

Each jurisdiction has at least one Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) counselor assigned who acts as a bridge connecting the youth and services in their community and works closely with the Gang Task Force coordinator from the jurisdiction served. This program promotes the integration of interventions across service systems to include, but not limited to employment, mentoring programs, recreation programs, mental health, court services, schools, and other community agencies.

Lastly, the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force coordinators propose to utilize public service announcements (PSAs) designed to increase public awareness and education regarding gang issues and gang prevention, intervention, education and suppression resources. Their goal is decreasing gang involvement and gang violence. The use of PSAs has historically been shown to be an effective vehicle by which other organizations communicate important information to the public. The PSAs will target three different audiences (parents, youth, and community) and they will be in English and Spanish.

County and City Commission Participation

County and city commissions can assist in responding to gang activities. Generally, county/city commissions set fiscal and strategic funding for the county or city. Prosecutors' ability to work with the commissions can assist in funding specific programs for combating gang-related activities. For example, the goal of the Shelby County, Tennessee District Attorney's Gang Unit is to prosecute high ranking gang members in the county. This can be a challenging task when no witnesses or victims will come forward to testify against gang members. However, the Shelby County commission funded the district attorney's office to provide various types of protection for witnesses and victims.

Another example of a commission that has provided support in the response to gang activity is the San Diego, CA Gang Commission. Members of the commission advisory board include the mayor, city council, city manager, and one member from each of the following fields: faith-based community, public health, law enforcement, K-12 education, social services, and employment agencies. Also, one member on the board is a reformed ex-gang member. The commission meets monthly to make recommendations on gang prevention, intervention, and suppression methods. The advisory board ensures that collaboration between agencies exists to respond to gang problems and develop proactive policies, ordinances, and guidelines. Moreover, the commission assists in locating local, state, and federal funding to support gang programs.

Advocating for Legislative Change

Whichever mechanism for action is chosen, a major role that prosecutors can play is to advocate for legislative change if appropriate. The legislature, prosecutor, and law enforcement must examine the current laws of the jurisdiction and determine if the current gang laws appropriately address gang-related crime. Jurisdictions without gang related statutes must examine the need for such laws. Many jurisdictions within the last two decades have enacted anti-gang initiatives such as the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP)¹¹ in California or have passed similar laws, in some cases modeled after the STEP Act.¹² Even though most gang legislation criminalizes the gang's activities or expands the definition of a "predicate criminal act" or gang-related crime, legislatures should attempt to address fundamental social and economic conditions that give rise to gangs and provide for programs designed to control, supervise, and treat serious or habitual juvenile offenders. A jurisdiction can attack the root of the problem with an increased commitment to prevention and begin to replace those conditions that give rise to gang membership.

For example, under Virginia law § 16.1-330.1, juveniles who have been convicted of one gang-related felony can be placed into the Serious or Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP). SHOCAP is a comprehensive program which provides treatment, case management and supervision for chronic offenders. One of the most important outcomes that SHOCAP has provided Virginia is the ground work for the creation of legislation that increases collaboration between agencies thus creating a stronger infrastructure for responding to gang activity.

Prosecutors and executive law enforcement officials are in a unique position to potentially affect social change. They have the access to legislative and executive leaders to present current and critical information about

¹¹ Cal. Penal Code § 186.21, et. Seq. (See Appendix A). In 1988 the California legislature enacted the STEP Act, a comprehensive piece of gang legislation that has withstood the scrutiny of California's appellate court and was made permanent in 1997.

¹² A list of states having enacted laws designed to address gangs or gang-related crime can be found at the Institute for Intergovernmental Research's Web site located at www.iir.com/nygc/gang-legis/.

gang problems. Information that should be presented to officials is the number of cases that are charged under gang-related statutes or the number of gang members charged under existing assault, drug, or gun laws. This type of evidence can highlight missing statutes that are needed to combat gang-related crimes.

Strong drug and gun laws may address the need for gang-related statutes, since the majority of gang-related offenses revolve around these two areas. Even though having strong laws to address highly organized and routinely violent gangs are necessary, the majority of gangs are loosely affiliated and not well organized. Strong felony and misdemeanor drug and gun laws when enforced may address some gangs at the local level.

If current traditional criminal laws do not adequately address gang issues, jurisdictions should consider the ultimate goal they want to achieve before enacting legislation. Some considerations for the development of legislation may be:

- State Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act
- Redefining gang activity or substantive crime
- Creation of gang-free school zones
- Changes to the disclosure of victim/ witness information
- Injunctions and declaring gangs a public nuisance
- Establishment or enhancement of witness protection programs
- Gang Recruitment statutes
- Asset Forfeiture
- Witness intimidation or obstruction of justice
- Multi-jurisdictional grand juries or investigations
- Presumption against bail
- Hazing

When drafting new legislation, however, one must take into consideration the common pitfalls and methods of attacking gang legislation. The most common challenges arise from rights, such as claiming that a proposed law is unconstitutionally vague or overbroad and infringes upon constitutionally protected rights. The more flexible and broad a statute is, the more likely it will not endure a constitutional challenge in court by

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the criminal defendant. Many defense challenges have produced court rulings which have ensured gang statutes are not used for abuse of communities or individual freedoms. Allowing law enforcement the broad discretion to interpret the meaning of gang legislation may allow for an abusive and unconstitutional situation.

The creation of gang legislation sends a clear message even if the gang statutes are rarely charged or utilized. Gangs are given notice that their behavior and criminal activities are not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the community. Also, the community is reassured that something is being done about the problem, and when action is taken community members will have a greater sense of safety.

The prosecutor can also advocate for legislative change at the state and local levels. At the state level, Suffolk County District Attorney testified in front of the Massachusetts house panel of public safety on victim and witness intimidation.¹³ Through the joint effort of the district attorney, state senate, and state lieutenant governor, comprehensive legislation was created to address victim and witness intimidation. A bill was approved both by the state house and state senate funding witness protection programs and seed money to create partnerships for prevention and intervention programs.

Education

Another mechanism of action is through educating fellow prosecutors, allied agencies, judges, and parents in the community on gang responses. For example, the Essex County, Massachusetts Prosecutor's office works with other law enforcement agencies within their jurisdiction to perform community gang awareness and prevention forums. The goal of the forums is to increase awareness of gang-related activities and to increase individuals reporting of crime activities to police officers and create an open dialogue between the community and the prosecutor's office.

¹³Victim and Witness Intimidation Proposed Bill can be located at the Suffolk District Attorney's Web site at <http://www.mass.gov/da/suffolk//Agenda.html>.

For example, the District Attorney's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) in Riverside County, CA provides training on gang awareness and prevention to community members (educators, parents, students). The program has been able to create partnerships and collaboration with faith-based organizations, community organizations, and local school districts to provide education, intervention, and prevention to combat gang activity. For example, a faith-based organization provides counseling and parent education courses for gang members and their families. PSN and community organization have partnered to develop and provide community resource fairs for residents. The collaboration between PSN and schools has provided the opportunity to develop several school-based anti-gang programs for at-risk youth such as a school parent involvement program, youth mentoring program, and healthy choices classes.

There are different systems in which to respond to a gang problem. The overall goal of the action mechanisms for responding to gangs is to eliminate gang-related activities in a community by increasing intelligence sharing across multiple agencies. Moreover, these mechanisms empower prosecutors and individuals in the community such as parents, victims, and community leaders to respond to gang problems.

ALIGN THE FORCES

Organizational Change

Organizational changes are needed when putting into place a comprehensive gang response model. Prosecutors must decide the best way to organize their office and provide training to prosecutors in order to respond to gang problems. In doing so, prosecutors should ask themselves a few questions about staffing issues and case processing. Such questions include:

1. Does the office have staff members who are experienced in gang-related cases or are additional staff members needed?
2. Will the staff be engaged in prosecution, prevention, or both?
3. Will there be a dedicated gang unit?
4. Will vertical prosecution be used for gang-related cases?

The answers to these questions will assist prosecutors in determining what types of organizational changes are needed.

Staffing Issues

Careful consideration must be given to the special demands placed upon these prosecutors when determining who within the office will handle gang-related crime. It is incumbent upon the administration or elected prosecutor to determine and select those prosecutors who have some experience working on gang-related cases and a passion for this specific area due to special circumstances that come with the job. Most gang-related crimes occur after a normal business hours and gang prosecutors may be required to respond to crime scenes and assist law enforcement in their investigations. Gang prosecutors may be required to be on-call, creating long and unusual working hours. In addition, trial skills of prosecutors are imperative, since trying a gang case can be one of the most challenging undertakings prosecutors can experience. A prosecutor must possess a certain command in the court room, deal with reluctant witnesses, perjurious testimony, and motives and intent based on a gang culture.

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The elected prosecutor must determine if staff will be engaging in prosecution, prevention, or both. As a part of gang prevention, prosecutors will need to be able to establish a connection between themselves and community members. These connections will provide prosecutors with helpful insight into gang issues at a community-based level and resources that are needed in order to combat gang-related crimes. Prosecutors will also need to be able to establish an open line of communication with other law enforcement agencies in order to share much-needed gang intelligence.

Elected prosecutors must determine if a single prosecutor will be assigned to gang-related cases or if a gang unit consisting of multiple prosecutors is needed. This decision will depend upon the number of gang-related cases that go through the prosecutor's office and the number of prosecutors in the office. By limiting the number of prosecutors responsible for gang prosecutions an office ensures more continuity between staff and law enforcement. By selecting certain prosecutors to handle all gang-related crime, gang prosecutors are able to develop a working relationship with law enforcement's gang unit. Therefore, decisions regarding investigations and prosecutions of gang members are determined by those individuals with the most knowledge and intelligence of gangs in the jurisdiction. Such concerns as deflection become simplified as law enforcement's gang units and gang prosecutors jointly coordinate investigations. The nature of an organized response to the gang problem may be based on suppression efforts; however, altering an organizational structure and operational activities can assist in the development of partnerships with other agencies and community groups. A coordinated effort between law enforcement and the prosecutor's office allows for the unified recruitment of outside parties to assist in the development of a comprehensive response to gang-related crime.

Case Processing

Traditional trial prosecutors are tasked with moving the criminal court docket along. This fast paced practice is a hindrance to the ability to identify trends that might exist among multiple cases. The day-to-day line prosecutor in a trial courtroom may not have the familiarity with defendants or witnesses to make connections in cases such as retaliatory shootings or gang-related recruitment. However, a fulltime dedicated

gang prosecutor or gang unit will have an advantage over other trial prosecutors, who in most cases are overburdened with case processing. This type of case processing is called vertical prosecution. Vertical prosecution allows prosecutors the ability to screen cases and take to trial only those cases charged by the unit. Findings from a national prosecutor survey found that a third of prosecutors' offices from large jurisdictions (population greater than 250,000) used vertical prosecution for processing gang cases in their gang units.¹⁴

Gang prosecutors have a unique advantage in their ability to work a case from "cradle to grave" or vertically prosecute gang members. Gang prosecutors using vertical prosecution will assist in the ability to develop an understanding of the gang culture, relationships between different gangs, and identify community concerns as they relate to gang-related cases. For example, a drive-by shooting no longer is a simple random act of violence once coupled with the fact that a rival gang sells narcotics from the same street on which a gang member and innocent by-stander were killed. Vertical prosecution was one of the key elements in Operation Hardcore, a prosecutorial gang suppression program in the Los Angeles, California District Attorney's Office. An evaluation of the program indicated that vertical prosecution assisted in increasing the rate of gang-related convictions, reduced prosecutor caseload, and reallocated unused resources toward victim assistance.¹⁵

Another unique advantage to vertical prosecution is the ability to develop a crucial rapport with victims and witnesses. Prosecutors can gauge, at the time of screening, which victims or witnesses might be threatened or become un-cooperative by the time of trial. These witnesses may need to be relocated by law enforcement leading up to the trial date for fear of retaliation. When dealing with issues of reluctant witnesses or witness intimidation, trust in the criminal justice system and the prosecutor is vital in vertical prosecution. Victims and their families develop a bond of trust with the prosecutor; he or she has worked with the victim or fami-

¹⁴ Johnson, C., Webster, B., & Connors, E. (1995). *Prosecuting Gangs: A National Assessment*. National Institute of Justice: Research in Brief. Washington, D.C.

¹⁵ Howell, J.C., (2000). *Youth Gang Programs and Strategies*, National Youth Gang Center, Institute for Intergovernmental Research, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

ly since the investigation and filing of criminal charges and is an accountable figure for the administration of justice. For further assistance with the development of trial strategies and vertical prosecution please refer to APRJ's *Prosecuting Gang Cases Monograph*.¹⁶

Collaboration

At the community level, collaboration is the key to a holistic approach to solving gang problems in a jurisdiction. Collaboration allows for all voices from the community to be heard and to join forces and bring together resources to combat gang-related activity. Additionally, working collaboratively helps to eliminate duplication of effort and to increase information sharing.

For example, Kent, Donaldson, Wyrick, & Smith highlight the collaboration among law enforcement, probation, and prosecution that was developed for the Tri-Agency Resource Gang Enforcement Team (TARGET) in Westminster, California.¹⁷ The gang crime intervention program goal was to aggressively prosecute gang leaders while working with the schools and community to reduce gang violence. Non-traditional methods including civil gang-injunctions were used on two Hispanic street gangs. Over time, gang crime was reduced by 47 percent. The ability to keep open lines of communication between law enforcement, probation, and prosecution and working as a team strengthened their abilities to increase public safety and hold gang leaders accountable for their actions.

Another example of collaboration occurred in Redondo Beach, California. In 1995, the Redondo Beach Police Department held a community meeting and asked residents, police officers, city prosecutor, and other city officials to attend.¹⁸ During the meeting, individuals discussed

¹⁶ *Prosecuting Gang Cases-What Local Prosecutors Need to Know* at http://www.ndaa-apri.org/pdf/gang_cases.pdf or by calling 703-549-9222.

¹⁷ Kent, G., Donaldson, S., Wyrick, P., & Smith, P. (2000). Evaluating criminal justice programs designed to reduce crime by targeting repeat gang offenders. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 23, 115-124.

¹⁸ Information on the Redondo Beach City Attorney's Office can be found at http://www.redondo.org/depts/city_attorney/default.asp.

the problems that they experienced in their neighborhood. Through information sharing between attendees, they established a united front against gang-related activities that were occurring in specific neighborhoods. One particular park was known as a gang hangout. Police officers and prosecutors worked together to prosecute individuals arrested near or around the park. Moreover, as a part of individuals' probation, they were not allowed at the park. These actions were able to lower the gang-related activity in that neighborhood.¹⁹

Collaboration may occur much easier if the buy-in is from the top to facilitate collaboration even though the collaborative activities may occur between line personnel. For example, it will be much easier for an elected prosecutor to maintain a reciprocated dialogue with other top officials (mayor, chief of police) than it would be for line personnel from the prosecutor's office to maintain such a dialogue. This open line of dialogue should also include memoranda of understanding as well as consideration given to house prosecutors in police stations where they can assist in the police-prosecutor dialog.

Prosecutors in urban areas may have more opportunity for collaboration than prosecutors in less urban areas because of the greater number of different potential resources operating in urban areas. As such, prosecutors in smaller suburban and rural areas may want to consider reaching out to collaborate with fellow prosecutors from other jurisdictions from urban areas or jurisdictions similar to their own and who have had experience dealing with gangs.

¹⁹ Cameron, J. R., & Skipper, J. (1997). The civil injunction. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 66 (11), 11-14.

IMPLEMENTATION

Community Outreach/Mobilization

Efforts to involve the community and community-based organizations in gang prevention, intervention, and reintegration can be beneficial in combating gang problems. First, identify different community-based organizations in the community. A partnership should be built between the prosecutor's office and community organizations that will allow for collaboration. Collaboration between prosecutors' offices and organizations can be easier facilitated when all entities are speaking the same language. Community organizations typically have the perspective of helping their clients succeed but generally have little experience with the criminal justice system. Prosecutors might have a meeting with community officials, residents, and others in order to educate them on how prosecutorial procedures are conducted and why these procedures are necessary so that justice is served in the community.

Community outreach that can be beneficial for responding to gang problems is working with youth groups and gang members. The gang unit in the Shelby County Prosecutor's Office has visited numerous schools in their jurisdiction to educate youth on gang activity and gang recruitment. Youth can be important informants on the current status of gang activity in communities. The Shelby County Prosecutor's Office conducted a gang survey in two area schools in 2002. Students were to respond to questions about gangs and gang activity. They found that in one school the majority of the students (79%) indicated that gang members attended their school. Also, survey results highlighted the reasons why youth at their school joined gangs. A follow-up survey in 2003 was given to the same two schools which can provide current trends in gangs and gang activities in specific areas over time.

One resource that might assist prosecutors in a gang response is collaborating with governmental agencies. Prosecutors can contact agencies such as child protective services, law enforcement, housing authorities, and especially the mayor's office or city council, of which might provide

some beneficial assistance against gang-related activity. For example, individuals in Loudoun County, Virginia, have created a Gang Response Intervention Team (GRIT).²⁰ The team consists of officials from the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office; Community Corrections Program; Family Services; Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Unit; Parks, Recreation and Community Services; Sheriff's Office; and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. The goal of GRIT is to reduce gang activity by providing intervention, prevention, and services to potential, current, and former gang members and services for victims/witnesses of gang-related crimes. The types of services include early intervention programs, electronic monitoring of offenders, school resource officers, and victim/witness programs. These services are only made possible by collaborating with multiple agencies in the jurisdiction.

Schools can provide another context where prevention and intervention programs can be administered. The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office joined together with the Massachusetts attorney general to create an education curriculum entitled Understanding Violence. The goal of the program is to educate youth about the risk factors of gang activity and consequences of gang involvement through presentations, group discussions, and written projects. Another example of a school-based prevention program is the Gang Resistance Education and Training program G.R.E.A.T. The Atlantic County Prosecutor's office in New Jersey is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance to administrator G.R.E.A.T. in their jurisdiction.²¹ The goal of the program is to educate children in the school setting about the negative consequences of joining a gang, providing alternatives to gangs, and an open dialogue between program instructors and children. There have been mixed findings on whether the G.R.E.A.T. program is effective in reducing juvenile gang involvement over time.²²

²⁰ The Gang Response Intervention Team can be found at <http://www.co.loudoun.va.us/GRIT>, accessed on March 7, 2007.

²¹ Further information about Atlantic County Prosecutor's involvement in G.R.E.A.T program can be found at <http://www.acpo.org/>.

²² Preliminary results indicated positive impacts for the G.R.E.A.T. program were found in Esbensen, F., & Osgood, D.W. (1999). Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.): Results from the National Evaluation. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36, 194-225. However, fewer positive findings were found in Esbensen, F., Freng, A., Taylor, T. J., Peterson, D., & Osgood, D.W. (2002). National evaluation of the gang resistance education and training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. pp. 138-167. In (Eds.) W. Reed & S. Decker, *Responding to gangs: Evaluation and Research*. U.S. Department of Justice: Washington, D.C.

Findings from a longitudinal evaluation indicated that the program did change youths' attitudes about becoming involved in a gang.²³

Another example of a gang program is the Safe Passage Program implemented by the California Attorney General.²⁴ As mentioned above, gang members recruit individuals in close proximity of schools. The safe passage program uses a network of adult volunteers (community members, police officers, educators) who are strategically and physically located in specific areas or known for gang-related activities. The idea is that the presence of adults can help to protect youth who are at-risk for victimization by gangs when walking to and from school and to prevent gang members from recruiting youth to join their gangs.

Community-based group programs can provide essential assistance in combating a gang problem. For example, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America provide a prevention and intervention program for referred at-risk youth to participate in programs and activities.²⁵ The goal of Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach is to work with potential or current gang members by providing individuals with positive experiences through case management and programs that meet the needs of these youth. Individuals are referred by schools, law enforcement and other youth service providers. An evaluation found that 62% of the individuals in the prevention program were able to reframe from joining a gang over 12 months. Thirty-one percent of the individuals in the intervention program stayed out of gangs over 12 months.²⁶

Faith-based community organizations are actively involved in prevention and intervention of gang problems. Gang Outreach is a faith-based gang program that provides weekly activities (support group meetings, Bible studies, conflict resolution training, and community service activities) in

²³ Esbensen, F., Freng, A., Taylor, T. J., Peterson, D., & Osgood, D. W. (2002). National evaluation of the gang resistance education and training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. pp. 138-167. In (Eds.) W. Reed & S. Decker, *Responding to gangs: Evaluation and Research*. U.S. Department of Justice: Washington, D.C.

²⁴ A description of the Safe Passage program is located at <http://safestate.org/index.cfm?navid=436>.

²⁵ Boys and Girls Club of America Web site address is <http://www.bgca.org/programs/specialized.asp>.

²⁶ Arbreton, A. J. A., & McClanahan, W. S. (2002). *Targeted outreach: Boys & girls clubs of America's approach to gang prevention and intervention*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

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neighborhoods known for gang activity.²⁷ The program targets prisoners, youth who hang out at local parks, and wanna-bes. Program officials include a collective partnership between community members, former gang members, parents, police officers, probation officers, and pastors. There are a number of services provided to youth through the outreach program such as educating students through presentations on gang-related issues, speaking at neighborhood watch meetings, working with law enforcement, locating safe havens for gang members attempting to leave their gangs, and purchasing clothing to replace gang color clothing.

Another example of a prevention and intervention effort is the L.A. Bridges Program.²⁸ The program has three components: prevention, intervention, and community action. These three components are set forth by a collaborative group of community members, 27 middle schools, public and private entities (L.A. Police Department, Mayor's Office, faith-based institutions, etc.). The prevention component provides individual and family counseling, anger management training, organized recreational activities (education field trips, theatre arts, and computer training); and community improvement projects. The intervention component provides educational and job-skills training for gang members, case management, restitution services, tattoo removal, and gang prevention seminars. The community action component focuses on community mobilization activities that strengthen neighborhood cohesiveness and the collaboration of multiple community entities.

Community outreach during gang members' reintegration from prison back to their community can potentially assist individuals in living law-abiding lives. There are several factors that can stand in the way of this happening. Typically, gang members released from prison lack lawful work experience and have limited education.²⁹ Spergel and Curry found that cities with chronic gang problems reported that jobs, education, and community mobilization were the most effective responses to gang

²⁷ A more detail account of the Gang Outreach program can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/~gangoutreach/index.html>.

²⁸ Further information about L.A. Bridges program can be found at http://www.lacity.org/CDD/you_ganglabr.html.

²⁹ Fleisher, M. S., & Decker, S. H. (2001). Going home, staying home: Integrating prison gang members into the community. *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 5 (1), 65-77.

problems.³⁰ In order to provide employment opportunities for gang members, Homeboy Industries, a faith-based organization, provides job opportunities and alternatives for gang members by mediating the relationship between businesses and gang members.³¹ Homeboy Industries has programs that provide remedial education, job training, job placement, tattoo removal, and case management. Of key interest, job developers from Homeboy Industries forge relationships with companies in the community that are willing to have former gang members work for them. Moreover, job developers assist former gang members in writing strong resumes and try to match job clients with qualified workers.

A gang lifestyle can be detrimental for gang members' interpersonal familial relations.³² Moreover, reestablishing and maintaining social ties with family members when returning home from incarceration can be challenging. Formerly incarcerated individuals might find that many changes have occurred during their incarceration. For example, individuals might discover that their spouse has a new partner or that their children are now grown adults. In San Diego County, law enforcement and community-based agencies work together to provide a reentry program that provides inmates (female and male) life skill services.³³ Individuals attend classes on such topics as substance abuse, parenting, domestic violence, and anger management. From formerly incarcerated individuals' perspective, strong ties with family members keep them from recidivating. It is important to mobilize community members in a way that can protect individuals from starting where they left off with their criminal behavior before entering jail or prison. For a further discussion of the potential role prosecutors might have in the reentry process please refer to APRI's forthcoming monograph *Reentry Initiatives: Examining the Prosecutor's Role in Reentry*.³⁴

³⁰ Spergel, I.A., & Curry, G. D. (1990). Strategies and perceived agency effectiveness in dealing with the youth gang problem. In C.R. Huff (Ed.), *Gangs in America* (pp.288-309). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications; See also, Spergel, I.A. (2007). *Reducing Youth Gang Violence*. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press.

³¹ The Web site for Homeboy Industries is <http://www.homeboy-industries.org/>.

³² Scott, G. (2004). 'It's a sucker's outfit' How urban gangs enable and impede the reintegration of ex-convicts. *Ethnography*, 5 (1), 107-140.

³³ Burke, C., Howard, L. and Doroski, L. (2005) Family TIES - Helping Inmates Transition Back into the Community. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Royal York, Toronto.*

³⁴ Fanflik, P. L., Troutman, D. R., & Nugent-Borakove, M. E. (forthcoming). Reentry initiatives: Examining the prosecutor's role in reentry. *Special Topics Monograph*. Alexandria, VA: The American Prosecutors Research Institute.

Multidisciplinary Programming

Holistic and balanced approaches to gang activity using interactive multidisciplinary programs that prevent, intervene, suppress, and reintegrate are the best way to respond to gang activity. This approach should include efforts to educate the community and raise awareness about gang activity and gang crime. Finally, to the extent possible, programs should have been or be in the process of formal evaluation to assess effectiveness of mechanisms, processes, and outcomes.

A prime example of a holistic approach currently in action is the city of Richmond, Virginia's Gang Reduction and Intervention Program (GRIP). GRIP is a pilot program within the Virginia Attorney General's Office funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to target areas of Richmond that have relatively high rates of crime and gang activity. While the attorney general administers the program, collaboration exists among the Attorney General's Office and the City of Richmond, local, state, and federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors, probation and parole officers, schools, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations. GRIP has been able to identify and fund effective existing programs as well as creating and funding new programs that address the four components of the program. The components are prevention, intervention, suppression, and reintegration. These four components will be able to combat gang activity and provide children with healthy alternatives to gang involvement.

GRIP is designed to approach the problem of "gangs" by first attempting to prevent children from joining gangs. In the primary prevention strategy, high-crime and high-risk areas are targeted with one-stop service resource centers. Within the resource centers, various programs such as prenatal and infancy programs, after-school and summer activities, and truancy and dropout prevention programs are offered. Under the secondary prevention component, children between the ages of seven and 15 who may be at risk of joining gangs are identified and offered educational involvement in schools, community-based, and faith-based organizations.

Second, the gang intervention component of the program targets gang members, their associates, and former gang members who are being released from prison. This strategy requires aggressive outreach to gang members and recruits in order to guide them into assessment, intervention and monitoring programs.

The third piece of the program, gang suppression, targets gang leaders and the worst offenders/gang leaders in the community. Local, state and federal law enforcement officers and prosecutors work to remove these dangerous individuals from the community using state charges, federal charges, aggressive prosecutions, and enhanced sentences.

The fourth component, offender reentry, seeks to return former gang members from prison and jail to their communities, paying special attention to those who may face multiple legal or lifestyle obstacles. A key part of this plan is the sharing of information between confinement facilities, probation and parole officers, and community intervention service providers.

To date, GRIP has funded approximately 50 programs designed to address the various components of GRIP. In addition, GRIP collaborates with other committees, service providers, and the community itself to leverage additional resources. It is this collaboration that has allowed GRIP to fund many programs. Since the creation of GRIP, the Richmond Police Department, through directed patrol, has observed a decrease in crime in the target areas during the funded period in the following:

- Overall crime is down 35%
- Aggravated assault down 83%
- Property crime is down 31%
- Robberies are down 44%
- Homicide is down 85%

The GRIP program appears to be making a difference in the targeted communities. However, please note that the crime level percentages are based on observations alone and other factors might be affecting crime levels in the targeted areas. Further rigorous evaluations are needed to determine the full impact the GRIP program has on gang-related crimes.

EVALUATION

Perhaps one of the most critical elements of planning a comprehensive response to any type of social problem, including gang problems, is evaluation. It is also the element that receives the least amount of attention and is often addressed as an afterthought when it is necessary to justify the expenditure of resources. The key to making sure gang programs help address the gang problems is to incorporate evaluation into the program at every step along the way.

The evaluation process begins at the planning stages with the establishment of goals and objectives for the gang response strategy.³⁵ Goals and objectives are important for measuring success in that they establish where the program is going and how you will know when you get there.

- Goals represent the long-term impact that will occur as a result of the gang strategy and describe the end results—not the means to the end.
- Objectives are the shorter-term outcomes that indicate progress is being made toward goal attainment and describe in measurable terms who or what will change, by how much, and over what period of time.

Once goals and objectives are established, specific activities that are designed to achieve the goals and objectives can be designed. For example, if the goal is to eliminate gang activity in the community and one of the objectives is to decrease by 20 percent each year the number of youth ages nine to 11 who join gangs, then an appropriate strategy might be a gang prevention program implemented in the elementary schools. As different activities are being implemented, it is important that a process evaluation be conducted. A process evaluation tracks the implementation of activities and establishes the foundation for establishing causal relationships between activities and any observed outcomes. The process evaluation tells the story of what you did as part of the gang strategy in terms of what was implemented, how many people were

³⁵ For a full discussion of how to evaluate programs, see Nugent, M.E. (2007). *Just Look What You've Done: Determining the Effectiveness of Community Prosecution*. National District Attorneys Association: Alexandria, VA.

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reached, how much time was spent, how many activities were held, how many hours of services were delivered and to how many people, etc.

At the same time the activities are being tracked, it is important that consideration be given to the intended outcomes. Regular monitoring of information related to the objectives is important for determining if any change is occurring. Generally speaking, this information will focus on statistics but may also include more qualitative information such as before and after pictures as well as interviews. Thus, using the example from above, if the objective is to reduce by 20 percent each year the number of youth ages nine to 11 who join gangs, yearly measurement should be made of how many youth in that age group have joined gangs.

If the outcome evaluation shows that the intended objectives are not being met, regular monitoring allows for mid-course correction. Prosecutors can use the evaluation information to make changes to the existing gang strategy, add new activities, eliminate activities, or increase intensity.

Outcome evaluation measures can be categorized into four components: system measures, community measures, crime measures, and cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness measures. Both qualitative and quantitative information should be obtained for all four components and must be collected before, during, and after a gang program has been developed and implemented. Collecting information at three time periods assists in determining causal relationships between the program objectives and outcomes. Examples of the four types of measurement are as followed:

1. System measures: Annual data should be kept on the number of cases filed, vertically prosecuted cases, witness/victim initiation reports, gang-related convictions, and sentencing information of gang-related cases.
2. Community measures: Qualitative information can be gathered from sources such as community meetings with public officials, residents, and school officials to provide insight into specific neighborhoods that are infested with gangs. Interviews with law enforcement officers that have experience paroling gang-related areas and individuals

who work with victims of gang-related crimes can be helpful in understanding the current status of gangs in the community. School surveys can provide insight into the gang-related issues that exist and the common gang-related occurrences that happen in the school system.

3. **Crime measures:** Collection of quantitative data might include such things as number of gang-related arrests and crimes. Conducting crime mapping both pre- and post-gang involvement can prove to be helpful in identifying the impact the program has on gang-related activities by noting a change in specific gang and gang member characteristics, as well as by location, migration effects of specific gangs, or gang members.
4. **Cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness measures:** Outcomes were related to the average cost of a participant in the program, the amount of money invested by the community for gang problems, and the number of services provided for former gang members and victims of gang-related activities.

CONCLUSION

No jurisdiction is immune to gangs or gang-related activity. This paper is intended to provide prosecutors and allied professionals with the knowledge needed to assist in the development and implementation of a comprehensive gang response model. Several factors that must be considered are:

First, a gang assessment is critical for accurately identifying the scope of a gang problem in your jurisdiction. The definition of a gang should include both gang formation and criminal activity. A broad gang definition will over-estimate the number of gangs and gang activity in your jurisdiction. Conversely, a narrow gang definition will under-estimate the number of gangs and gang activity in your jurisdiction.

Second, aligning the forces at the community level and the prosecutor's office will provide an open line of discussion between individuals in the jurisdiction and the prosecutor's office, provide an infrastructure of available resources, and prevent duplicated efforts.

Third, the use of a gang task force, county/city commission, legislative changes, and education can strengthen the jurisdiction's response to gang activity.

Fourth, evaluating the comprehensive gang response model during all stages is critical to ensuring that the gang response is successful. For example, if the definition of a gang does not adequately capture the various gangs in a jurisdiction, then the concept must be redefined. An evaluation of a comprehensive gang response model should be considered as an ever-continuing feedback loop of information that can improve the elements within a gang model.

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Each jurisdiction has certain unique differences so a gang response model will not be the same from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, jurisdictional differences exist based on the types of gang-related crimes, number of resources in the community, and the number of employees in a prosecutor's office. However, despite the differences that may exist, the use of the major components of the comprehensive gang response model discussed in this paper will empower prosecutors to effectively respond to gang-related activities in their jurisdictions and produce safer communities.



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