



OJJDP Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

Fact Sheet #38 December 1996

SafeFutures: Partnerships To Reduce Youth Violence and Delinquency

by Kristen Kracke and Special Emphasis Division Staff

Project Overview

Under the SafeFutures project, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides approximately \$1.4 million a year for 5 years to each of six communities (four urban, one rural, and one tribal government). SafeFutures assists these communities with existing collaboration efforts to reduce youth violence and delinquency. SafeFutures also seeks to improve the service delivery system by creating a continuum of care responsive to the needs of youth and their families at any point along the path toward delinquency. This coordinated approach of prevention, intervention, and treatment is designed to serve a community's juveniles and encompasses both the human service and the juvenile justice systems, including health, mental health, child welfare, education, police, probation, courts, and corrections.

To support and enhance the local coordination of a continuum, OJJDP pooled funds from nine broad program component areas. These resources enable SafeFutures communities to fill their identified needs and service gaps in such program areas as family strengthening; afterschool activities; mentoring; treatment alternatives for juvenile female offenders; mental health services; day treatment; and graduated sanctions for serious, violent, and chronic offenders. SafeFutures also promotes gang involvement prevention and intervention services with gang-involved youth.

SafeFutures urban sites are Boston, Massachusetts; Contra Costa County, California; Seattle, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri. The other two sites are Imperial County, California (rural) and Fort Belknap Indian Community, Harlem, Montana (tribal government). The sites were selected competitively on the basis of substantial progress toward community assessment and strategic planning to address delinquency through a continuum of care for children and families. These SafeFutures sites also demonstrated their commitment to the development of a continuum of care through the degree to which they forged collaborative partnerships and leveraged local resources. Preference was given to Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities, and four of the six SafeFutures sites (Boston, Imperial County, Seattle, and St. Louis) are located in such areas.

A national evaluation is being conducted by The Urban Institute to determine the success of the collaborative efforts in all six sites. The evaluation will document the impact of SafeFutures interventions by capturing and reporting data on risk factors, juvenile offense rates, the juvenile justice system, and system processing rates from initial custody through aftercare. OJJDP is providing direct technical assistance to the sites as well as collaborating with Federal agencies and private organizations to leverage and broker additional technical assistance resources for the communities. OJJDP is coordinating the technical assistance through a Technical Assistance Coordinator, under the OJJDP National Training and Technical Assistance Center, which utilizes the resources of more than 40 training and technical assistance providers. Technical assistance plans have been developed for each site as well as a SafeFutures listserv for the exchange of peer-to-peer assistance. Additionally, OJJDP has developed partnerships with several organizations to provide services and dedicate resources specifically to the six SafeFutures sites to further local efforts in establishing a continuum. These SafeFutures Partner Organizations represent an array of training and technical assistance resources and programmatic strategies for addressing the problems of youth. The following is a list of those contributors.

- ◆ Bethesda Family Services Foundation
- ◆ Boys and Girls Clubs of America
- ◆ Communities In Schools
- ◆ Developmental Research and Programs
- ◆ Home Builders Institute
- ◆ Johns Hopkins University Institute for Policy Studies
- ◆ National Association of Service and Conservation
- ◆ National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- ◆ National Crime Prevention Council
- ◆ Parents Anonymous

OJJDP thanks these partners for their commitment and support of SafeFutures, and acknowledges, with special appreciation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development for its inter-agency support of \$100,000 for training and technical assistance targeted to violence and delinquency prevention in public housing.

OJJDP is also assisting the SafeFutures sites with coordination of other Federal programs offered locally (including Weed and Seed, the Comprehensive Communities Program, and the U.S. Attorneys' Anti-Violence initiatives).

Boston, Massachusetts

The Office of Community Partnerships, in collaboration with the Blue Hill Avenue Coalition (a community coalition comprising more than 70 public and private agencies), is focusing on SafeFutures efforts in the Blue Hill Avenue Corridor neighborhoods of Grove Hall, Franklin Hill/Franklin Field, and Mattapan. This area's poverty, crime, unemployment, and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the State.

The coalition has established a total support network of neighborhood residents and youth, community-based service providers, schools, churches, housing authorities, probation, police, and corrections to address the multiple service needs of juvenile offenders and those at risk of delinquency, as well as their families. This network builds on existing resources, organizes community planning, and integrates community service systems. A unique aspect of Boston's program is increased local administrative control and decisionmaking through neighborhood governance boards established in each of the three target areas.

Contra Costa County, California

The SafeFutures initiative, managed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and advised by a steering committee and the Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committee, builds on communitywide planning efforts that began in Contra Costa as early as 1979. Highlights of Contra Costa's initiative include mental health services for seriously emotionally disturbed youth, gender-specific services for girls, gang intervention, and a true system of graduated sanctions that includes a coordinated aftercare case management component. The overall initiative emphasizes family and school-based services for at-risk youth.

Seattle, Washington

Seattle's SafeFutures program targets the low-income neighborhoods of the Central Area, Southeast Seattle/Rainier Valley, the International District, and Delridge, which have some of the highest crime rates in the city and are focal points for gang-related violence. A community planning board develops policy, conducts annual strategic planning efforts that include diverse communities, and ensures that the vision of the SafeFutures program is implemented and that systemic changes are realized. Highlights of program components include a work crew program,

an education and support group for adolescent girls (with a focus on gang-involved Cambodian girls ages 12 to 18), mentoring, parent support centers and mental health services for families of girls enrolled in the Cambodian Girls Group, afterschool programs, case management services for growing immigrant and female populations, and an alternative school.

St. Louis, Missouri

The St. Louis SafeFutures program operates under the direction of the Office of Youth Development within the Mayor's Office. Targeted youth include residents of Enterprise Community neighborhoods located near the business district and those under the supervision of the juvenile court. Critical goals of the St. Louis program include guidance and support for at-risk youth, delinquency prevention, promotion of gang-free schools, and expansion of services and programs offered by the Juvenile Court and Department of Youth Services. To meet these goals, St. Louis is undertaking a variety of activities, including family support, tutoring, job skill training, employment programs, outreach programs, expanded case management services, and the development of a communitywide gang taskforce.

Imperial County, California

Grant funds support a planning coordination committee of about two dozen public and private organizations to address juvenile delinquency in the North End communities of Brawley, Calipatria, Westmoreland, and outlying areas, including Niland. A school-linked family resource center (FRC) serves as a focal point for case management and referral of youth and their families to services such as mentoring, mental health services, and special services for at-risk girls. Student assistance representatives identify at-risk students and link them with services at the FRC. Unique features include a youth congress, a multiagency gang reduction project, a residential facility for adjudicated youth, and a peer court.

Fort Belknap, Harlem, Montana

The Fort Belknap Indian Community, a tribal government located in north-central Montana, is home to the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes that reside in and around the Fort Belknap Reservation. The SafeFutures strategy was developed by the Fort Belknap College Anti-Violence Task Force, a coalition including tribal government, law enforcement, schools, housing, health, social services, and State and county officials. SafeFutures will serve as a catalyst to increase the community's capacity to meet the needs of youth on the reservation. Key elements of this project include establishing more family strengthening services and afterschool activities that provide alternatives to delinquency.

For more information regarding SafeFutures, please contact Kristen Kracke, SafeFutures Project Coordinator for OJJDP, at 202-307-5914.