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Community Mobilization Model

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Introduction

The primary means for dealing with the youth gang problem in both emerging and chronic problem cities should be community mobilization. Essential to this process is the participation not only of local criminal justice and community-based or human service agencies, but grassroots groups, including local residents, parents, and even former gang influentials. Since youth gangs involved in serious assaults and criminality constitute a threat to the safety and security of larger as well as the immediate community in which the problem may be concentrated, established governmental and non-profit agencies along with grassroots groups should take key responsibility for developing the community mobilization process.

Important is the integration of concerns, resources, and planning across local, state, and national governmental jurisdictions. In other words, a wide range of representatives from different levels of government and non-profit agencies and local community groups must be involved in recognizing and defining the problem, organizing and planning to address it, implementing and sustaining these plans, and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of programs which result. In this process, there is a special responsibility by leaders of established agencies, particularly local government representatives to reach out to grassroots groups to provide access to organizing resources, exchange information about the problem, and develop cooperative approaches to dealing with it.

Community mobilization signifies a process of consciousness-raising, addressing the concerns and long-term interests of those most affected by the problem, rational identification of the specific dimensions of the problem, and development of the will and commitment of participants to act. The mobilization process does not usually occur spontaneously. It is a process which seeks to develop community and agency capacities focused on understanding and dealing with the problem through use of a variety of mechanisms and activities. It must be guided by effective professional agency and citizen organizers who take on complementary leadership roles. The process depends on cooperation and managing conflict between and among significant community groups and actors which lead to improved awareness and response to the problem.

Consideration of the distinctive factors of a particular gang problem situation in a specific community context is required for the effective mobilization of local interest and resources. Patterns of community mobilization will vary with the nature, scope and seriousness of the problem and distinctive cultural, racial/ethnic, economic, and social factors in emerging or chronic gang problem cities. The history of community response, and especially the nature of present leadership and inter-organizational patterns also need to be assessed. Special emphasis must be on mobilization of resources within as well as across grassroots, interagency, and government levels.

This model will identify key issues for conducting a community mobilization process, with focus on the interrelationship of agency and grassroots efforts and the distinctive role of the coordinator or organizer. The integration of community concern and agency missions with reference to the problem is a principal objective of the process. The following discussion should be viewed in the context of the General Community Design For Dealing with the Youth Gang Problem.

Problem Recognition and Local Context

Community mobilization usually begins with concern that a youth gang problem is emerging or that an existing problem is getting worse. Some authority, for example, the local police or local group calls attention to a gang situation, or the media itself may independently report the nature of the problem. In an emerging problem context, street corner groups seem larger, better organized and more threatening. Gang names, colors, and graffiti to mark off territory are in evidence. Fights suddenly occur between youth groups or gangs at parties, rock concerts, parks, or in front of public schools at dismissal time. Knives and guns may be used. A drive-by shooting may even take place. In chronic gang problem cities, the level of gang violence and visibility rises, or spreads to a part of the community that was formerly untouched; gang-related robbery, extortion, intimidation, drug use or selling. Drive-by shootings may result in killings of innocent bystanders as well as gang members. Of special concern is the growing frequency of retaliatory shootings between youth gangs.

A community's response to the problem begins when there is a heightened threat to life, property and the sense of social order in the community. Persistent and dramatic media reporting may facilitate this awareness. In the course of increased gang violence and growing citizen concern, a respected community leader or set of leaders usually arises to articulate that a social problem not only exists but that some special action needs to be taken. A police chief, a youth agency leader, a church activist, a school official, a grassroots leader, or someone in the mayor's office gives voice to the problem and calls for key actors or city influentials to get together to combat it.

An agency executive or grassroots leader, with the sanction or support of a public authority, usually the mayor, should convene a meeting. It is possible that some existing organization or council, governmental, non-profit, or a combination can be stimulated, energized, or expanded to convene such a meeting. The convener brings special moral power, administrative or political influence that signifies some form of collective community and agency response must occur. Meanwhile, certain organizations individually may have already begun to act. The police usually increase patrols. More parents show up to chaperon youth at school dances. A school principal, or a youth service agency director attempts to expand services but needs more staff to deal with the problem. A local political candidate or office holder may express

his views to enhance his visibility and credibility in the community.

A mayor's committee, task force, interagency group or forum is formed and convenes to express concern and consider how to address the problem. This group takes testimony from a variety of agency, community leaders, and local citizens about, the scope and seriousness of the problem. But the dimensions of the problem and what to do about it are still not clearly known or understood. A special study committee then needs to be formed. A group of agency or community experts, or a university research group may be requested to study the problem and recommend what should be done to prevent youth gang development and/or to reduce the apparent problem of gang violence and possibly related drug trafficking. The special study group or commissioned university research group is then expected to report back with findings and recommendations, including some clear description or definition of the characteristics of the problem and policies and program for dealing with it.

Problem Assessment

In the course of the committee's meetings that follow, the gang problem must be defined as fully and consensually as possible. The assessment report and discussions on the nature and extent of the problem must address the following questions: What are the delinquent or criminal activities committed that make the activity gang-related, e.g., turf, signs, symbols, colors, assault and intimidation? How many gangs are involved? Where are the problems located? What are the age, race/ethnicity, gender, and criminal history characteristics of the gang participants? How are the gangs structured in terms of leadership, core members, fringe members and "wannabees?" What are the school and job statuses of members?

Answers to these questions should be available from various sources, albeit with different degrees of completeness and accuracy. More systematic sources of information are usually found in larger cities with chronic gang problems. Quantitative data on activities of the gang as a whole and of individuals in the gang may be available from the police, schools, and probation. Anecdotal information also needs to be acquired from local citizens, parents, youth agency representatives, former gang members, and even gang members themselves. Prior governmental, school, and university reports on the youth gang or related problems may be available. A survey of local community residents or students as well as agencies concerned and familiar with the problem can be conducted.

There needs to be some clarity and agreement among key community actors about the nature and scope of the problem prior to decisions regarding a response. The problem may be defined largely as an emerging one in which youth gang groups are still relatively unorganized. They may contain mainly younger youth who may not yet be engaged in frequent serious crime, especially violent assaults.

Turf boundaries and membership may be unclear with symbols and criminal patterns relatively undeveloped. The problem may be confined to a few schools and neighborhoods. On the other hand, particularly in chronic problem cities, gangs may be viewed as larger and better organized than at an earlier time. Coalitions or alliances of gangs, older youth and young adults, drug trafficking and adult criminal connections will be present. Variations of emerging and chronic gang problems may be found in the same community.

Gang problems also tend to vary by cultural, racial/ethnic and generational factors. These have to be carefully identified. Suppression and intervention approaches will vary depending on these and other factors, if effective strategies are to be developed and implemented.

Explanations of the problem should then be attempted. In some emerging contexts, the claim is usually made that the problem has been introduced or "imported" from outside, i.e., another city-- usually a larger nearby city with a very serious, long-term gang problem. Youth from newcomer families from the "big" cities may be blamed for introducing local youth to gang patterns, including gang related violence and other serious crime. Claims may be made that "outside" gangs are franchising drug operations or that the gang from the "big" city has extended or decentralized its operations to the smaller city or community. Deeper examination of the problem may reveal, however, that a new low-income population has arrived in the community or that the old established low-income minority population has grown in size, poverty, and social isolation. Youth from these populations are discovered to have high rates of school failure and drop-out. The job market is now more restricted; unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are no longer readily available. Claims may also be made that funding limitations resulting from conservative national or local social policy may have reduced social development programs for youth.

The problems in chronic gang contexts seem to be of a different origin and character. Gangs and gang-related crime may have been problems for decades. Gang violence seems to ebb and flow and is attributed to a variety of factors: downturns in the economy; concentration of the poor in certain low income housing projects; periodic release of gang leaders from prison; movement of established agencies and middle class leaders out of the ghetto or barrio; the closing down of certain youth programs; and also the development of new drugs or new opportunities to sell drugs, such as "crack" cocaine. The precise relationship between the development or a rise in the gang problem and these factors is not clear. However, the dimensions of the youth gang problem and its probable causes in relation to particular context should be examined.

Program Resource Assessment

The existing resources and programs to deal with the problem must also be determined, through analyses of existing programs

specifically serving gang youth or potential gang members. Remedial education, vocational training, job programs, outreach youth socialization services, family treatment and school counseling programs, and other special efforts actually dealing with gang youth and their families should be identified. Ideally, an assessment of the scope and quality of these and other programs, actually and potentially dealing with the gang problem should be developed.

The community mobilization process develops in earnest not only as the programs and approach of the different actors are examined, particularly but as representatives of the different agencies and community groups interact with each other as to what are the best program approaches for dealing with the problem. The roles and personalities of the various actors in the community gang response are displayed. More importantly, the role relations, and problems in these relations, of the different organizations become apparent. Also, role partners, i.e., people with similar philosophies and potentially supporting approaches are identified.

Some agencies and organizations can and do a good deal of power, moral or legal or economic, in regard to the problem. Agency and community coalitions evolve. It is incumbent on the more powerful agencies, whether the mayor's office, the police department, the schools or youth agencies, to make sure that adequate representation of local citizens and grassroots organizations is present and that the opinions of those closest to the problem on a day to day basis are heard. Competing observations, analyses, and claims among and between the various types of organizations about exists and should be brought forward.

The discussions should be focused on the youth gang problem in its various complex aspects and perspectives. A plurality of realistic solutions to the problem must be carefully examined. The interrelationship of the potential solutions need to be stressed. The idea of a comprehensive approach to the problem should be encouraged; otherwise gang crises become simply a basis for individual agencies fundraising and solidifying competitive relationships between agencies.

The lack of a systematic and cooperative attack by agencies on the problem leads to failure. The pattern has to change, preferably as agencies and community groups themselves seed to establish a common understanding. Certain leaders or coalitions of actors will be proactive and move the mobilization process ahead -- usually for a variety of community development, problem resolution, as well as agency or organization interest reasons. Ideas about a specific structure to further consider and implement the various proposed solutions also begin to emerge.

In the assessment phase, reasonably accurate and reliable information as to nature and scope of the problem, possible causal explanations, and the specification of program resources available to deal with the problem have to be established. Good data serves to dispel misinformation and provide a framework for a promising response. Basic causes as well as precipitating or immediate events of the problem and specific response strategies are

identified. Youth gang phenomena should come to be viewed not only in individual and group behavioral terms but in social structural and organizational terms, including, for example, the absence of stable, cohesive family structures, inadequate school programs, a lack of training and jobs for older youth, and insufficient outreach or focus on the gang problem by agency programs.

The identification of the problem in strategic terms sets the stage for a more systematic discussion of program or action priorities to be selected in the development of a community response. Strategies have to be constructed or reconstructed largely based on modification and elaboration of current approaches: suppression, including police, probation, and prosecution arrangements established to deal with the problem; social intervention or youth programs, including outreach or crisis services, social opportunities provision, especially school, job training, and placement programs directed to problem youth; and community wide or interagency structures or mechanisms which may serve over the longer term to spearhead a mobilization effort to deal with youth gangs.

An important achievement of the assessment stage occurs when key agencies, particularly law enforcement, clarify and accept common definitions as to what constitutes a gang, a gang member, and a gang incident. These key agencies must determine whether a youth gang includes a group of youth engaged simply in any kind of ephemeral delinquent activity, a durable group of youth with a name, colors, symbols, and leadership structure especially committed to inter group conflict and status achievement; or a delinquent group connected to adult criminal organization, e.g., engaged in drug trafficking or other systematic criminal gain activities, or some combination of these sets of characteristics. Most importantly, law enforcement agencies, with the assistance of other agencies, should begin to determine whether to have a broad or narrow interpretation of a gang related incident, e.g., whether focus should be on every offense committed by an identified gang member or more narrowly on specific offenses which grow out of gang interest, motivation or function. An appropriate definition of the problem is required which does not exaggerate the scope of the problem and unnecessarily stigmatizes youth. On the other hand, a definition which denies the scope and seriousness of the problem should be avoided. The youth gang problem must be defined and targeted in valid and manageable terms.

Many of the issues considered, particularly of a response nature to the problem, are technical, and require special attention by key professionals of selected agencies, particularly law enforcement, prosecution, probation, schools and youth agencies. Further, different kinds of information and ideas may be more relevant to one type of agency than another. Technical and confidential information should be shared in such a way as to protect both youth and the community. The sharing of certain types of information should require informed consent of target youths and their families. On the other hand, certain information about the

gang problem, particularly of an aggregate nature should be reshaped across agencies and community groups.

Organizational Interests and Community Mobilization

The development of an effective process of community mobilization may encounter problems for a number of reasons. Key actors may prefer not to join in the community-wide effort and continue to develop their programs on their own terms. Meetings of the community wide task force may be largely ceremonial in which no real interagency program and related community group cooperation develops. A serious problem occurs when community or public agency leadership is not sustained to address the issue. A single public agency or a coalition of agency or community groups may have insufficient resources or influence to move the mobilization process forward.

Failures or delays in community mobilization mainly occur because agencies and local community organizations seek to protect or enhance 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 rivalries and conflicts may prevent discussion of common goals and objectives and the means for collaborative endeavors. For example, the police department may develop its own gang unit without a community advisory group or grassroots input; the schools may develop a special 5th and 6th grade gang awareness program without reference to older gang youth in the school or the kind of special monitoring or preventive activities that local citizens, the police or probation can provide; a youth agency may solicit funds for an outreach program to mediate conflicts between gangs without regard to intervention by key influential organizations or community groups. Police advice and appropriate law enforcement support activity are not sought.

Failures of a community mobilization process may also occur because of insensitivity to distinctive community racial, ethnic or class interests. The leadership of the mobilization process may be white and not recognize black or Hispanic interests in the community. Meaningful relationships with grassroots leaders who are close to and understand the gang problem may not have developed the gang problem can become a basis for further polarizing of the community. The community may be torn apart by racial turmoil with the gang issue being viewed as a problem of institutional racism. Local community groups may also represent middle or lower class interests and have sharply differing opinions about the values of community protection or which services and opportunities are appropriate for gang youth. On the other hand, citizen groups inside and outside the community may be apathetic and not regard violence as a serious problem, particularly if it does not directly affect them. Struggles among organizations and groups in a high gang crime area may take on a confused, amorphous no-win inter-racial and class conflict character.

In summary, the community mobilization process can move forward only when an influential leader or group of leaders with high commitment to resolution of the problem develops a close set of relationships, relevant goals and action plans based on mutual trust and common agreement on the definition of the problem and what needs to be done about it. The plan must not only be supported by key political and economic forces in the local and broader community, but must meet at least partially the survival and developmental needs of existing agency programs and community groups. Two key mobilization objectives need to be met. All important actors with relevant programs, who can make a significant contribution to resolving the problem, must get a "piece of the action," but only on condition that they collaborate in interrelated, if not interdependent, fashion and make certain organizational and program changes consistent with the goals and objectives established by the general council, or task force or community wide committee.

Furthermore, if youth gang problems arise in communities characterized by a lack of resources and social disorganization - for instance, impoverished residents, newcomer or disorganized families and fragmented culturally insensitive, and resource poor service delivery systems - the provision of added social resources is essential but may still be insufficient to deal with the problem. The additional resources and services developed produced must be integrated or closely related to each other; otherwise programs become highly competitive, may develop inconsistent approaches, they may simply expand services for a variety of youth and fail to target gang youth. Gang youth often "fall between the cracks" of "beefed up" social services, social opportunity programs, and police sweeps. It is not only individual youth and criminal group behaviors which create the youth gang problem, but also inappropriate responses by agencies and community groups at various stages of the problem's development. The failure of the larger community to meet the needs of local institutions through appropriate policy development and resource provision i.e., a lack of vertical integration - which may have partially created the basis for the youth gang problem or at least its aggravation.

Goals, Objectives, and Organizational Structure

A set of general strategies and interagency and community group agreements must be developed sooner rather than later. It must be accompanied by evidence of political, administrative and community support. A promise of funding from public and/or private sources has to be given. A promise of investment of energy and even funds by local citizens also has to be made, negotiated and developed at various points. An appropriate long-term implementing structure has to be conceived and initiated. It may be an independent organization or attached to a particular agency, public or non-profit -- criminal justice or community-based agency. A network of churches, grassroots groups or local community

organizations must be integrally involved and support the new venture.

Specific goals and objectives for the reduction or prevention of gang-related crime still have to be selected and prioritized. These goals should be related realistically both to the particular scope and nature of the problem as well as to existing political interests and community concerns. Objectives targeting specific types of groups, ages of youth, and locations of gangs and youth at risk must be established. Service patterns by agencies and mechanisms for interagency program relationships have to be specified. Short and long range objectives to deal with significant aspects of the problem must be explicitly detailed for the community as a whole and for particular agencies and community groups.

Integrated policies and procedures for carrying out goals and objectives, in particular a set of reciprocal roles by police, prosecution, probation and corrections, youth agencies, employment services, schools, grassroots organizations and other actors have to be specified. This means, for example, that the police should make explicit how they will achieve suppression objectives, and how they will cooperate with the prosecutor's office, probation, schools, youth agencies, and the business community to carry these objectives out. The police must also indicate how they will support certain social intervention and social provision objectives, for example job development, in conjunction with other agencies. Procedures for collaboration of schools and youth agencies with the police should be specified.

Youth agencies and schools, in turn, must indicate what programs they will develop to achieve short and long-term objectives, e.g., improved grade performance of and after school services for gang youth, and how they will cooperate with each other in achieving their reciprocal objectives. Their support of activities to suppress gang activities should also be specified, for example, close supervision of gang offenders, sharing of information about selected gang youth, and patrol of community "hot spots" in collaboration with police, probation, and community groups.

As suggested above, different kinds of information in the youth gang problem and particular youth should be shared among different sets of organizations under conditions which provide constitutional safeguards to gang youth, and protect both gang youth and the community. Thus, it is inappropriate for criminal justice personnel to share information on gang youth with school administration and school administrators with school teachers and to encode fresh information in school in such a way that gang youth are stigmatized and impeded from receiving positive, rehabilitative academic assistance. Similarly it is appropriate for school authorities to transmit information on gang youth to other agencies for any purpose, without the informed consent of parents and youth in question. On the other hand, it would be extremely important for all agencies and communities to share information at the gang,

or aggregate, situational and community levels which will serve to prevent and control gang activity.

The structure of decision making and program development is likely to be less complex in emerging than in chronic gang problem cities, where fewer key players are present and relationships are less formal. Principal mobilization issues in emerging problem contexts should ordinarily focus on better use of existing resources, such as modification of school programs and placement of at-risk youth in available part time and full time jobs. A preventive approach must emphasize improved social intervention through outreach; program coordination; targeting of youth at risk; and special support programs for newcomer or socially isolated families, particularly those with older youth who are committed gang members.

A cooperative, if not collaborative structure is needed to facilitate the development of an integrated approach or common to the gang problem in emerging gang problem jurisdictions. As suggested above, clear commitment to a common approach should be obtained in writing from all agency and community organizations. This coordinating structure can be a publicly or privately sponsored organization with sanction from all key players in the community. A school or youth agency or some special administrative structure combining representation of both organizations with collaboration from police, community organizations and others is required. The structure, particularly in smaller communities, needs to emphasize use of the existing network of official and formal agencies or community organizations. However, special attention must be paid to inclusion of representatives of the minority groups, such as African-Americans, various Latino, or Asian groups often new to the community, who are closest to the problem on a day to day basis. Furthermore, it is critically important that such representatives not be token minority group members. They must be sensitive to and knowledgeable of local racial/ethnic group and group needs and problems with acceptability in both the document as well as minority communities.

More substantial structural changes and significant additional social resources may be required to affect control and reduction of the problems in these cities. Significant school reforms and a major infusion of additional job training and job placement resources may be necessary. Remedial educational, alternative school and special job programs should target gang youth. Ideally the special gang program should be an integral part of large scale economic development initiatives to deal with more general problems of poverty and deprivation.

The process of mobilization within a chronic problem context also must be carried out in interrelated and interactive ways -- at the grassroots community group, individual local agency and inter governmental department levels. Cooperation and collaboration within and across organizations, community groups, and government agencies are essential. Such cooperation must be more formally and widely organized than in an emerging problem city. There must also be special flexibility in policy development and program

implementation as organizations and gang problems vary in more complex ways. Chief responsibility for community mobilization should be lodged probably at a combined interagency and local grassroots level within the framework or sponsorship of a local government office, e.g., the Mayor's office or a special council or commission with resource support from state and federal government. The most appropriate implementing and coordinating mechanism is probably a public commission sanctioned by the state with participation required by law enforcement and the interests of affected grassroots group representatives, whether African-American, Latino, Asian, a caucasian, or otherwise from the gang-impacted target areas as well as criminal justice and community-based agencies including schools and business associations from the larger community.

Implementation

The following types of program structures and activities should be developed in emerging and chronic youth gang problem contexts. While we describe differences of approach in these two types of problem cities, it is important to recognize that these differences are primarily of emphasis and that problems and programs may vary as much within types of gang problem cities as across them. A good deal of flexibility and tailoring of approaches to particular cities, organizations, and changing youth gang problem situations is required.

Of special importance is the development of programs by key organizations which share common objectives in regard to the gang problem. Relatively simple or easy to execute programs, such as informational or patrol programs should be initiated which emphasize common or reciprocal tasks across agencies and community groups. Opportunities for successful participation by local citizens in controlling the problem should be made available, particularly as they receive aid and guidance from local or city-wide government a well established governmental and community voluntary agencies.

Emerging Youth Gang Problem Context

An interagency task force affiliated with a local school district and a particular youth agency should be established to deal with an emerging youth gang problem. Members of the task force should also include police, probation, community organizations, and citizen representatives of the various race/ethnic from the target communities. A series of goals and objectives must be formulated which interrelate and balance suppression, social intervention, and opportunities provision strategies, especially as implemented through youth agency and school based programs. Target schools in a particular area or neighborhood should include, a high school, middle schools and elementary schools, with special focus on the middle schools--where early intervention and activation may be especially relevant. The

following set of organizations should devise appropriate programs, to implement gang oriented missions and procedures with key attention to interagency relationships and citizen involvement.

Police

1. Gang trained patrol officers, special gang officers, or in a larger city, a special gang unit needs to be established. A special crime analysis system should be established to target repeat gang juvenile offenders. Focus should be on those offenders who commit offenses which grow out of gang motivation or gang function, rather than offenses which are non-gang related.

2. The officers or the unit must also target key gang leaders largely responsible for organizing or influencing youth gang their members in criminal, particularly gang violence related, activity. Special arrangements should be made by police, probation, prosecutors and judges to target such older youth through effective monitoring, prosecution and, if necessary enhanced sentences along with appropriate rehabilitation opportunities.

3. Special surveillance patrols should be provided to schools and other places where gang youth are known to congregate and gang-related violence is likely to occur.

4. The police should also help parent and resident groups to develop citizen patrols and provide other assistance in controlling gang activity. Witness protection arrangements should be carefully worked out in conjunction with the prosecutor's office.

5. Gang unit or youth officers, in cooperation with community relations officers, should also undertake major prevention and gang awareness campaigns directed to parents, residents, store keepers, business and professional groups as well as social service agencies in gang impacted areas. Emphasis should be on information about the nature of the problem, successful programs and what each local group can do to prevent and limit the scope and seriousness of the problem.

6. Youth gang officers, along with a community relations officers, should be assigned, on a secondary basis or to the extent departmental policy and resources permit, to social intervention and job development functions, e.g., referrals of gang youth and their families to social service programs and cooperation with local youth service and church programs in the implementation of camping and recreational activities. They should also periodically canvass business and industries for full time and part time jobs, specifically ear-marked for gang youth or potential gang youth.

Schools

1. A special gang prevention and intervention unit, in close association with a cluster of community-based agencies, should be formed in the District School Superintendent's office with staff teams assigned to each of the target schools. They should be stationed or closely associated with the principal's, assistant principal's or disciplinarian's office. A combination of early

social intervention and opportunities provision programs should be emphasized for gang youth and those youth clearly at risk.

2. Gang youth who have been identified as repeat gang offenders should be targeted for special academic and/or remedial assistance as well as close supervision. However, these targeted youth must be integrated into regular basic academic programs, to the extent possible.

3. Ideally a school-community agency based team, should target parents of gang youth and those at high risk (based on specified criteria)¹ for social intervention and referral. The school should, with the support of a parent's group, take upon itself special responsibility for initiating and supervising such a community-based services effort. Primary emphasis would be on parent gang awareness and parent education, particularly as to youth social and academic development needs. Parents should be afforded not only gang awareness education, but also necessary social services. A variety of services, including referral for employment training and academic enrichment would be available to targeted parents and their family members.

4. Attention should be directed in gang problem neighborhoods to the formation of school councils, comprising a broad range of parents, teachers, and community residents, concerned with raising academic standards, enhancing school safety and security and improving student discipline in ways that pay special attention to the youth gang problem. Parent and resident patrols with the assistance of the police should be formed to monitor student and gang activities especially when students are on their way to and from school.

5. A special outreach program for gang youth and those at very high risk should be established at middle schools. Gang youth must be targeted for intensive remedial assistance and supervision, including home visits and services to families. Probably no more than five to ten percent of the student body in the highest gang problem schools will require such intensive efforts.

6. A variety of job readiness and apprenticeship programs must be organized at the local high school, particularly in chronic problem contexts, in cooperation with business and industry. Academically and socially handicapped older gang youth should receive special attention and provided with social support services.

7. The school system should also develop or collaborate with an alternative school program, particularly for gang youth who have dropped out of school. These youth would receive special remedial, vocational, and counseling assistance for one or two semesters,

¹ These criteria will include three or more of the following risk factors: contact with the police for gang activity; a family member is a known gang member; the youth gives evidence of identification with gang culture, such as flashing gang signs, wearing gang colors; arrest for a non-gang offense; and/or the youth is doing poorly in school.

prior to their return to a regular high school to complete their program; or they would be assisted to obtain a GED through appropriate community agency programs.

8. Special curricula should be minimally developed for grades 4 through 9 addressing the problem, with special attention to issues of gang prevention, early intervention, and control, e.g., gang recruitment, conflict mediation, self-esteem.

9. Procedures need to be established for sharing particular types of information especially between school and police, but also with other criminal justice agencies, on youth involved in gang-related activity in the school with regard for due process rights of individual students.

Youth Service Agency

1. Staff should coordinate as closely as possible with police and schools in providing services to gang and gang prone youth, particularly as part of school based human service teams in selected schools.

2. Youth agencies need to reach out to as many gang members and gang prone youth as possible, including on the streets. Such youth should be provided with a variety of meaningful socialization, recreational, vocational preparation, job readiness, and leadership development services. Special contacts and relationships need to be developed with key community influentials to facilitate this outreach process.

3. Youth agencies must, in addition, be advocates on behalf of gang youth and their families who often tend to "fall through the cracks" of existing social service and criminal justice programs.

4. Youth agencies should admit gang youth to all agency programs while providing protection, as necessary, to non-gang youth. A key aspect of mainstreaming should be the introduction of gang or gang prone youth, individually, to different parts of the program according to their different interests, personal and social problems. A major intent of this mainstreaming process is to loosen youth gang bonds.

5. A mentoring system should be established in which community adults, school or agency staff provide additional service and assistance to individual gang youth in which they become role models.

Grassroots Organizations

1. Parents and residents in the neighborhood must be helped to organize to develop a variety of activities and projects related to the youth gang problem. Special resources from a government or foundation source should be allocated to established community organizations, schools, churches, and community-based agencies to assist smaller, less well developed grassroots groups to organize to participate in community wide efforts to reduce the gang problem.

2. A wide range of educational and informational material and devices are required to alert local citizens to the nature of the gang problem and how to deal with it.

3. Members of these grass roots groups should be assisted to provide mutual support to each other for protection and development of campaigns against youth gangs.

4. Members of grassroots organizations can assist and bring various informal pressures to bear on certain parents to better educate their children to the dangers of gang membership through various informal counseling and home visitation programs.

5. Grassroots organizers should work to establish relationships of trust and confidence by local citizens so they can cooperate with police, probation, prosecution and other justice agencies in the provision of information about local gang problems and individuals involved in gang activity. A variety of neighborhood meetings and activities can be arranged to facilitate the building of such trust and confidence.

6. Grassroots organizations should also serve a special monitoring and advocacy function to make sure that public agencies, especially police and schools, and also community-based agencies are addressing the youth gang problem. Church-related groups, in particular, must be encouraged to be pro-active and hold criminal justice and community-based agencies accountable for effectively dealing with the gang problem.

7. Grassroots, particularly parent, organizations must make a special effort to both monitor and support the school in curtailing youth gang activity. These organizations should form parent patrols, examine school activities, and assist teachers and counselors to deal both forcefully and sensitively with parents whose children are gang members.

8. Grassroots organizations can take special responsibility for educating local businesses and home owners to be responsive to the interests and needs of local youth, especially for jobs and apprentice training roles.

9. Finally, former gang members with records of legitimate employment should be incorporated into grass-root group efforts. They can provide important contacts and insight into factors that produce gang incidents and advise on ways to reduce problems. They may serve as role models and can be useful in direct communication with youth gangs on how to resolve gang conflicts. Nevertheless, careful attention must be given to the development of appropriate criteria for selection and use of former gang members to assure that adequate social commitment and capacity to assist gang youth exists.

10. Efforts should be made not only to train local citizens in participating in a variety of anti-gang, but also in organizational decision making processes and roles dealing with the youth gang problem.

Criminal Justice System Actors

Probation, parole, correctional officials, prosecutors, and judges must play an important back-up role in cities with emerging youth gang problems, providing relevant information and assistance in the mobilization of local citizens and community-based organizations. The effective suppression of gang activities must be based on collaborative relationships with a variety of community agencies and groups in which criminal justice agencies participate in a variety of prevention and school intervention activities as well. Attention to gang youth by should not be confined only to older youth gang offenders but also high risk youth who may require a special combination of supervision, rehabilitation, remedial education, and employment opportunities.

Media

1. In reporting gang-related incidents, media representatives must be clear about the criteria established by official agencies to identify such incidents. Reporters must understand the complex issues of reliability and validity related to categorization of a violent or drug trafficking incident as gang-related.

2. Special care must be exercised in reporting gang incidents which give notoriety to a particular gang or gang member or present information which may facilitate gang retaliatory acts. Reference to gang names should be avoided wherever possible.

3. Reporters should carefully analyze those factors which contribute to youth gang activity, and discern those programs in the community or in comparable communities that appear to be successful in reducing the problem.

4. The media may be of special assistance in publicizing positive activities of gang youth or former gang youth who now follow productive legitimate careers and contribute to community improvement.

Chronic Youth Gang Problem Cities

Efforts to deal with the youth gang problem in contexts where it has been chronic or serious for a long period of time are somewhat similar to those recommended in emerging gang problem cities or contexts. However, arrangements among agencies and community groups must be more complex and more closely linked to criminal justice agencies. In fact, criminal justice agency units, the mayor's office, or a county public office must provide key leadership, if not sponsorship, of anti-gang efforts. Special efforts are also required by representatives of schools, training facilities, and business and industry to prepare and provide jobs for older youth gang members. Comprehensive youth agency and crisis intervention programs may need to be developed with attention to mobilization both of community efforts and support and supervision of gang youth in cooperation with criminal justice agencies. A variety of impediments resulting from traditional agency animosities and extreme competition for funds are impediments which may need to be overcome.

1. More attention than in emerging problem contexts should be directed to the development of specialized units, programs,

procedures. Also, more explicit development of coordinating mechanisms among criminal justice agencies to collect data, track, prosecute, and supervise chronic offenders may be required.

2. A substantial investment of available community as well as outside resources will be needed to support programs, especially at school, training, and special work sites to deal with gang youth. Agencies at state and federal levels must make special attempts to coordinate their efforts and avoid duplication of program initiatives. Funds should be targeted to hard core groups or youth at greatest risk, including older adolescents. Early intervention programs should have the second highest priority, followed by preventive programs for youths at lower risk, at least based on the scope of the present research and development program. In any case, care needs to be taken in anti-gang efforts not to target youth who are at very low or no risk of gang involvement.

3. Special arrangements and procedures are necessary to provide academic remediation, values change, and work training for youth in correctional institutions, since most will shortly return to the community. Correctional, institutional, and community-based programs must also be strongly linked. Integrated efforts by probation, parole, police, youth agencies, school, grassroots organizations and business are required to assist and avoid criminal activity with convicted gang youth when they return to gang environments. The availability of meaningful training and jobs and school support arrangements to make the best use of those opportunities is most important.

4. A variety of special youth socialization programs are required, e.g., late night basketball tournaments, weekend and vacation activities. These programs should be operated to the extent possible through local grassroots organization, youth agency or crisis intervention programs. They should provide significant socialization services for gang youth, also using local resident mentors.

5. Broad scale community improvement initiatives in respect to economic development, housing, and school reform must be encouraged by community business and political leaders who in such development programs should also target the youth gang problem.

6. The scope of the special interagency task force council or commission established to deal with gang problems in the chronic problem city should be inclusive of representatives of community residents, criminal justice system, social agencies, schools, universities, and business and industry. Former gang member participation should be considered. The commission must be committed to dealing with the youth gang problem on a long-term basis, also advocating for social legislation directed to gang youth. While its major function should be coordination, planning, and program development, it should also take responsibility, at least initially, for training staff across agencies and community groups and sponsoring gang problem assessment, research, and program evaluation. The staff of the coordination unit or council should comprise professionals and persons experienced and sensitive to the cultural background of groups in the targeted communities.

Funding for such an organization must be obtained not only from public but foundation, and other private sources. In due course some of these functions may be spun off to local non-profit agencies.

7. While a community mobilization process emphasizes a targeted approach and the most efficient use of local resources, it is clear that in both emerging, but especially in chronic, gang problem cities more state and federal resources will be required. It may not be possible to re-direct local resources or effectively mobilize local community efforts to deal with the youth gang problem where social problems and poverty are extreme.