

## Girls and Gangs: Improving our Understanding and Ability to Respond

### Project Overview

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, is initiating the largest quantitative research project on gang-involved girls to date. The two-year study will look at girls' desistance from gang affiliation and gang involvement. NCCD is examining the individual, family, and community factors involved in girls' desistance from gangs and gang-related crime. The project has six goals:

1. Identify the role of girls in gangs and their level of participation in gangs;
2. Identify the characteristics of gangs that allow for or encourage girls' participation;
3. Identify what inspires girls to leave gangs;
4. Identify common methods or strategies used by girls to leave gangs;
5. Identify protective factors that facilitate gang desistance; and
6. Provide service providers with useful information on girls' ability to leave gangs.

NCCD will interview approximately 20 stakeholders (community leaders, experts in gang intervention, experts in gender-responsive programming) and 125 gang-involved girls (ages 14 to 25) across California. Stakeholder interviews will focus on understanding what they have learned through working with girls regarding factors affecting desistance and best practices in engaging with and intervening in the lives of gang-involved girls. Interviews with girls will ask about their day-to-day lives, families, neighborhoods, gang experiences, and expectations for the future. Interviewers will ask girls who successfully left gangs about the strategies they used to become inactive. Through this study, NCCD seeks to inform communities, law enforcement, service providers, and researchers about the factors involved in girls' participation in gangs, gang crime, and ultimately desistance.

*NCCD promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice.*

## NCCD Research Team

- Angela Wolf, Director of Research
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- Estivaliz Castro, Research Associate
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## Girls and Gangs Advisory Board

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- Dr. David Springer
- Kevin Grant
- Monique Morris
- John Torres

## Publications and Webinars

Forthcoming