

The California Cities Gang Prevention Network

Welcome to the ninth bulletin of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network! In addition to updating you about our 2nd Advisory Board meeting, we will spotlight a few new members to the Network.

2nd MEETING OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

The 2nd meeting of the Advisory Board was held in San Francisco on November 14th and focused on the future policy direction of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network. In addition to members of the Advisory Board, attendees included representatives from the Network city teams and from our funding organizations: The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation. This provided for a rich cross-section of representatives from community-based organizations; city, county, and state representatives from Mayor's offices, probation, human services, the Attorney General's Office, and police departments, among others; and policy researchers. We were also privileged to have Paul Seave, the newly appointed Director of Gang and Youth Violence Policy for the Office of the Governor, in attendance.

The meeting did NOT focus on specific pieces of legislation, rather, the all-day meeting sought to find common principles upon which to ground the eventual recommendations to be made by the Network.

At the beginning of the meeting we heard from three speakers:

Nancy Lyons

The Little Hoover Commission's deputy director and chair of the Network's Advisory Board, Nancy Lyons, discussed the state's history of addressing youth violence, focusing on the Commission's 2001 report *Never Too Early, Never Too Late... To Prevent Youth Crime & Violence*. In this report, the Commission recommended that:

- The state should make prevention a priority;
- Funding for programs should be streamlined and integrated (e.g., common RFPs and funding cycles);
- Programs should reflect best practices.

Paul Seave

Paul Seave, Director of Gang and Youth Violence Policy for the Office of the Governor, discussed his priorities in his new role. Seave said that he:

- Has been talking with and listening to a wide range of individuals around the state;
- Thinks it is a great time to implement the recommendations of the Little Hoover Commission;
- Believes the state will need to be creative in funding youth violence work, as he does not foresee new resources at this point;

- Is intrigued by non-traditional approaches to funding, such as Enterprise Zones;
- Plans on convening state agencies to promote better coordination and planning;
- Is concerned about the limited data available at the state level; it consists of youth homicides and is only compiled once a year. He believes the state needs comprehensive data that is readily available.

Mayor Patrick Morris

Mayor Patrick Morris spoke of his work in San Bernardino, with a particular focus on Operation Phoenix:

- The city passed a ¼ cent sales tax to be used towards community-based policing and violence prevention activities.
- Operation Phoenix currently has a narrow geographic focus—a 20-square-block, high-crime area in which intense prevention, intervention, and suppression services are provided.
- To promote community integration, the city sponsors street parties and created a program for first-time homeowners in the Operation Phoenix area.
- Mayor Morris believes the neighborhood's residents can reclaim their community. The hope is to change the dynamic in the Phoenix neighborhood and to go beyond a decrease in violence towards the creation of an interactive, civic-minded community.
- The city encourages the creative use of resources to expand their reach, such as using church space for youth programming.
- Operation Phoenix will be expanded to five more areas in the City of San Bernardino.

By understanding the approaches, successes, and the needs of cities such as San Bernardino, the Network's Advisory Board can assess how the state might better support local efforts.

The meeting attendees then brainstormed the policy principles that seemed to best address the needs of the Network cities. Participants discussed and voted upon the suggested principles. The most popular principles included focusing on collaborative outcomes (e.g., outcomes in the three major areas—prevention, intervention, and enforcement); the necessity of city leaders taking an active role in their city's efforts; the importance of funding high-risk geographic areas and of supporting cities that show a commitment to comprehensive strategies; and a focus on youth development and community health. In the afternoon, meeting participants brainstormed promising programs in the areas of prevention, intervention, suppression, and community involvement. Some of the programs mentioned included:

- *Prevention:* School-based gang prevention programs, programs that promote parental engagement, and social clubs for middle school and high school aged youth that provide youth a safe outlet in which to socialize;
- *Intervention:* Street outreach, truancy programs, court-advocacy for system-involved youth, and tattoo removal programs;
- *Suppression:* Coordination within the law enforcement community (e.g. city attorney, district attorney, parole, probation, federal agencies), GPS tracking of parolees, and gang injunctions;
- *Community Involvement:* Informational programs that raise the community's awareness of issues in their own community and homes, such as signs of gang involvement and activity, community organizing that incorporates community's ethnic/native traditions, and faith-based organizing.

NEXT STEPS

The Network partners will analyze the Advisory Board's preferred policy principles within the context of the current state and federal legislative landscape. The partners will also look further into brainstormed "promising programs" to see if there is any research that confirms their effectiveness. Early next year, a tentative legislative strategy will be shared with the Advisory Board which will suggest how the Network should proceed.

MEET THE NETWORK'S NEWEST MEMBERS!

We have had three additions to the Network city teams. We welcome them to our Network, and are delighted to introduce them to you!

Devone Boggan

Devone Boggan is the Director of the newly-created Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) in Richmond. Prior to this position, he served as the Policy Director for Oakland-based Safe Passages, a youth advocacy partnership including the City of Oakland, the County of Alameda, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), the philanthropy sector, and community-based partners. Boggan also served as the Executive Director of the Mentoring Center, a community-based organization that provides training for mentoring programs, as well as its own direct service mentoring. As such, he brings to this new position a great deal of experience bringing together different organizations that work to reduce youth violence, as well as direct experience working in the community.

The Office of Neighborhood Safety aims to facilitate a long-term, sustained, intensive violence prevention effort that addresses the root causes and symptoms of violence by coordinating prevention and intervention services and resources. ONS focuses on the communities in Richmond that are most impacted by violence. ONS' program priority areas are:

- *Street Outreach*: This initiative aims primarily to reduce homicide and street related violence. Outreach workers will be identified, hired, trained, and deployed within North, South, and Central Richmond. These workers will live and work within the targeted communities and will represent the indigenous leadership and potential leadership currently existing within these communities. ONS will work with the outreach workers in the high-impact communities to develop and create an organized presence, assess resource capacity and needs of service providers, help individuals access available resources, provide crisis and conflict mediation, and intervene in potentially volatile situations where appropriate to provide "on the spot" stabilization and reduce the potential for retaliation.
- *Reentry Focused Employment Services*: ONS is currently working to identify effective reentry services, and the resources to support such services. Upon completion, ONS will propose that Richmond allocate resources for reentry services and develop an RFP for the provision of reentry services.
- *Faith Initiative*: Currently, ONS is working with several members of the clergy to better coordinate, develop, and implement opportunities for the faith community to become involved in the city's violence reduction efforts. Some of the proposed activities include community fairs with information on community-based organizations and available resources, block parties, evenings of peace, and community picnics.
- *Advisory Committee*: The Advisory Committee aims to support the development of priorities, programs, and initiatives that are aligned with ONS' goals and objectives. The Committee is a critical part of a larger effort to develop and increase public advocacy and support for expanding and sustaining resources that promote neighborhood safety and community wellbeing.

Jeff Carr

Jeff Carr is the first Director of the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development in Los Angeles. Prior to this appointment, he served as chief operating officer of the Washington, DC-based Sojourners/Call to Renewal, a Christian advocacy organization with a focus on social justice. Carr also spent 17 years working for the Bresee Foundation, a nonprofit established by the Church of the Nazarene that works to empower low-income Los Angeles communities through community organizing, resources, and support.

In his new role, Carr coordinates the city's violence prevention and intervention work. Los Angeles hired a contractor to conduct a needs assessment and resource mapping of several areas of the city. This work, which should be completed by March 1st, will identify the needs in various areas of the city as well as locally-available resources and services. Carr and his staff will use this information to choose seven or eight areas of the city in which to focus their efforts. The city will begin with an initial investment of \$500,000 in each of the communities for improving prevention and intervention services. Carr and his staff will then draft RFPs based on the needs identified. Carr's team will also work to nurture grassroots organizing in the communities and to coordinate the efforts of local service providers to prevent duplication of services and to ensure that existing resources are used most productively. Carr will also examine the city's expenditures on prevention and intervention efforts. His team will assess if the city's spending priorities are appropriate or if they should be revised.

Carr, although new to city government, has had extensive experience working with community organizations and directly with individuals. His staff also has a background in community-based work. He believes this background will help give them special insight into the issues faced by those working on the ground in the targeted communities, and will help his team productively support the service providers.

For example, Carr's team will demand "grassroots accountability" from service providers by going beyond the providers' annual reports and written information. They will spend considerable time in the targeted communities to fully understand the impact of the providers' work.

Kent Paxton

Kent Paxton is the Director of the Mayor's Office of Community Safety and Violence Prevention in San Bernardino. He comes to this position after 33 years of working with the County to improve the outcomes of at-risk youth. In particular, Paxton directed the Children's Network, which works to improve communications, planning, and cooperation among local youth-serving agencies. Paxton has also served on the Countywide Gangs and Drug Task Force, which targets youth at high risk of entering the juvenile justice system. One of the Task Force's programs focuses specifically on gangs and youth involved or at-risk of becoming involved in gangs. For this program, Paxton worked to integrate social services that target populations affected by gangs. The Task Force also created a strategic plan that coordinated gang prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts; this plan became the blueprint for Operation Phoenix.

Through his work in the County, Paxton has had considerable experience coordinating the efforts of community-based organizations, schools, communities of faith, and city and county agencies. Furthermore, given the focus of the Children's Network on the varied needs of at-risk youth—from mental health to education to involvement in the juvenile justice system—he understands the links among these areas and the complex causes at the root of violence. Paxton also worked on the county side of Operation Phoenix and is very familiar with the specifics of the program. This background prepares him to continue and improve the comprehensive approach towards community safety espoused by San Bernardino's Operation

Phoenix, which brings social workers, nurses, law enforcement, the schools, community-based organizations, and other city, county, and community services to the table.

Currently, Paxton's main priorities as Director of the Mayor's Office of Community Safety and Violence Prevention are parolee reentry and the expansion of Operation Phoenix to five new areas. To accomplish this, the city will have to find new local resources and coordinate the services provided by these for all the geographic locations. The City of Bernardino is currently studying how to creatively and effectively address the needs of the parolees that return to its neighborhoods. Paxton realizes that parolees will inevitably return to San Bernardino, and the city must learn to promote parolees' successful integration into the community to improve the likelihood that they will have a positive impact.

SAVE THE DATE

The 2nd annual meeting of the entire Network will be held in Los Angeles on February 28 and 29, 2008. Details will be sent to the city points of contact very shortly.

The California Cities Gang Prevention Network Project is funded by grants from The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF), the East Bay Community Foundation, and the Richmond Children's Fund. Created in 1992 as an independent, private foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education, and disease prevention.

The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation created in 1996 with a mission to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

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