The City of Yakima Gang Free Initiative

Community Action Plan: A Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention, Intervention, & Suppression of Youth Gangs

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2012 City of Yakima Gang Free Initiative

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and

Yakima City Council

Under the supervision of

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STATEMENT OF REPRODUCIBILITY

2012 City of Yakima Gang Free Initiative

Community Action Plan: A Comprehensive Approach to the Prevention, Intervention & Suppression of Youth Gangs

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City of Yakima Gang Free Initiative

Vision Statement:

The vision of the GFI is to create a safe, peaceful, gang-free community resulting in a high quality of life for our families.

Mission Statement:

The City of Yakima Gang Free Initiative will engage the community to develop suppression, prevention and intervention strategies that support and promote positive youth development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Yakima Community Action Plan for the Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression of Gangs (The Plan) represents the recommendations of the GFI Advisory Group to the City of Yakima for addressing the gang issue. Unlike other plans, it emphasizes prevention and intervention strategies at the neighborhood level and positions the City of Yakima together with community partners in a researched based, data driven, and outcome focused effort over the next 3 to 5 years.

Four central assumptions frame the overall architecture to the Committee's recommended strategy. The City of Yakima and its partners endeavor to:

1. Facilitate total community involvement through strategic guidance and leadership.

2. Prevent the growth of gang activity and violence in Yakima through multidimensional collaborative efforts.

3. Pursue necessary funding through collaborative efforts.

4. Restore Yakima neighborhoods by reducing gang violence and problem activity throughout the City.

While key findings are outlined in the Introduction to this Plan, the Advisory Group's Community Action Plan is based on the following fundamental constructs:

- A multidimensional anti-gang strategy should target youth between the ages 11-20 who exhibit high-risk behaviors and gang involvement.

- Young people who would move up the ladder of gang membership and activity are those who commit intentional acts of violence or are arrested for gang related incidents.

- The impact of gang members' actions not only adversely affects their parents, siblings, and other family members but the whole community—including the victims of gang violence who must deal with the horror of losing a loved one and the agony of having to deal with a variety of agencies to get restitution and support.

- No single program will fix the gang problems in our community.

- Strong public leadership by the City Council, City Manager and Chief of Police is essential.

- A coordinated and organized effort among all City departments, other government and community agencies is required to see results that integrate prevention, intervention, and suppression.

- To be effective, all programs and services focused on gang prevention and intervention must be culturally competent, linguistically sensitive, and accessible to the entire community.

These constructs must be evident in the partnership agreements entered into by collaborating entities with the City of Yakima.

This action plan targets the greater City of Yakima with special emphasis on "hubs" of gang activity in three neighborhoods—Northeast, North Central, and Southeast. In addition the Committee has established the following goals:

1) Establish the ***OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model*** as the operating system,

    and

2) Reduce youth crime, violence, delinquency and academic failure through the prevention, intervention and suppression of youth gangs.

Focusing on the goals stated above, the Advisory Group recommends to the City of Yakima the following five strategic objectives:

Objective 1: Establish an effective coordinated collaboration process to impact gang activity citywide.

Objective 2: Develop joint partnerships to help address the gang issues within the City of Yakima.

Objective 3: Establish a data and research analysis process to keep the City Council, City Manager and GFI Committee aware of gang trends and anti-gang research on an ongoing basis.

Objective 4: Based on existing funding, build capacity in existing, effective and promising gang prevention and intervention programs/strategies on a neighborhood basis.

Objective 5: Develop a sustainable funding strategy for the Community Action Plan.

Data Workbook

The Advisory Group's discussions of the community assessment data set the stage for development of the Action Plan for the first year of the project. Before the planning process began, the Advisory Group members participated in the collection, analysis and interpretation of Community Demographic Data, Law Enforcement Data, School Data, Yakima County Risk Profile, and the OJJDP Student Survey. This background information can be found in the Data Workbook included as Appendix A.

Community Profile

The 2011 Community Profile was produced for the benefit of key community stakeholders, policymakers and service providers. The Profile presents data and its analysis to support the development of a citywide anti-gang approach to reducing juvenile crime and violence in Yakima. The Gang Free Initiative, commissioned by the Yakima City Council, developed the Community Profile to support the fight against youth gangs and associated problem behaviors. The information contained within the Profile is intended to aid our community partners advance coordination of services, encourage the application of proven strategies, and improve opportunities for funding.

YAKIMA GANG-FREE INITITIAVE

Youth gangs and related problem behaviors give communities various reasons for alarm. Gang involved youth are responsible for more serious and violent offenses at a rate several times higher than non-gang-members (Howell, 1998). Gang members have an increased probability than their non-gang peers to commit assault, carrying concealed weapons in school, auto and other theft, intimidating or assaulting victims and witnesses, participating in drive-by shootings and homicides, and using, selling, and stealing drugs. This is true with similar upbringings and familial constructs (Huff, 1998). Studies indicate that the level of youth violence is greater when influenced by gang membership than that of other highly delinquent peers (Thornberry, 1998; Huizinga, 1997).

The City of Yakima has many resources to address gang violence and gang recruitment. The small number of social agencies and the relatively small target area to be served makes collaboration for the purpose of gang prevention possible.

Past funding has been used primarily on gang suppression. Data collected on gang treatments have focused on the effects of suppression. Research has focused on drug abuse and other problem behaviors leading the GFI Advisory Group to identify the primary problems within the context of youth gang crime and violence. They include:

1. Assaults, School-based
2. Bullying, School-based
3. Graffiti
4. Gang Association/Affiliation
5. Juvenile Violence
6. Substance Abuse, Youth
7. Truancy (Unexcused Absenteeism)
8. Weapons, Youth Access to

Several themes emerged relative to the root causes of the problem behaviors listed above. First and foremost was a pervasive culture of violence evidenced not only in the criminal behaviors perpetrated by gang members and their affiliates but also expressed among Yakima youth in survey responses. The ruthless and violent nature is not limited to gang members. An increasing trend has been identified among non-gang affiliated youth. The violent culture appears to parallel the increase in violent acts demonstrate by the various media outlets largely associated with global events. For example, the airing of state sanctioned high profile executions and their aftermath during peak youth viewing times and the ease with which youth can access uncensored images of violence via the internet may increase the likelihood that the viewer will engage in violent acts him/herself. (Akers & Burgess, 1966; Bandura, 1977, Hawkins & Catalano, 1996)

Other themes associated with the resurgence of gangs and associated problem behaviors include diminished capacity across systems (i.e., schools, police, and social service agencies), cultural divides, parental disconnectedness, fragmented familial constructs, availability of drugs and weapons, low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization. The binding factor among all of them continues to be the extreme economic deprivation (poverty) dominating many of Yakima's neighborhoods. It is important to note that poverty is not a causal factor; however, the

influence it places on individuals and communities contributes significantly to complex social dynamics. (Yonas, et al, 2007; Kramer, 2000.)

It is also worth considering the unique geographic location of the City of Yakima and how it may have contributed to the rise of gangs and associated problem behaviors. Yakima is also situated between major interstates and highways (I-90, I-82, I-182, I84, HW97, HW12.) This makes it easy for clandestine drug manufacturing to occur in remote locations with relative easy access to distribution points. Yakima is also primarily a rural agricultural community with an economy dependent on a consistent flow of migrant farm labor. While the overwhelming majority of migrant laborers operate within the limits of our laws and norms, it would be negligent to ignore the illicit activities easily concealable within the highly mobile nature of the migrant way of life. Criminals exploit well established communication and transportation routes between the Pacific Northwest, Canada, and Mexico. These facts have been acknowledged by the Federal Government with the designation of Yakima County as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. It has been well documented that the criminal organizations behind the trafficking of narcotics are largely supported by juvenile gangs who are easily lured to the industry by both romanticized risk and income.

The GFI Advisory Group recommends that the City endorsed programming be coordinated and implemented within each of the OJJDP five core strategies. Activities should be closely coordinated and integrated to ensure that the work of collaborating agencies is in line with the comprehensive anti-gang plan. The five strategies include:

- Community Mobilization: Involvement of local residents, including former gang youth, community groups, and agencies; and coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies.

- Opportunities Provision: Development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth.

- Social Intervention: Youth-serving agencies, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other criminal justice organizations reaching out and acting as links to gang-involved youth, their families, and the conventional world and needed services.

- Suppression: Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision or monitoring of gang youth by agencies of the criminal justice system and also by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups.

- Organizational Change and Development: Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across agencies, to better address the gang problem.

These five OJJDP core strategies are addressed in a more comprehensive manner later in this document.

GFI Advisory Group

The work of the collaborating partners, as set forth in this Plan, will be overseen by the City of Yakima GFI Advisory Group, comprised of representatives from agencies and organizations that have an interest in or a responsibility for addressing the community's gang problem. These representatives not only set policy and oversee the overall direction of the gang project, but also take responsibility for spearheading efforts in their own organizations to remove barriers to services and to social and economic opportunities; develop effective criminal justice, school, and social agency procedures; and promote policies that will further the goals of the gang strategy. The GFI Advisory Group is comprised of local stakeholders who focus their efforts on furthering the GFI objectives via various tasks as they relate to the reduction of gang related crimes and activity within the City.

The Advisory Group will meet, as decided by the Group, to review progress and determine work plan priorities. Standing committees may also meet monthly to aid in accomplishing the goals and objective of the Advisory Group. The "committees" will change and evolve as the needs of the Advisory Group change. Currently Advisory Group committees are:

1. *Marketing and Community Education Committee*. This committee develops and recommends all policies pertaining to the marketing of the Gang Free Initiative, including development and assessment of a comprehensive marketing strategy for the recruitment of partners and donors; formulation of a marketing schedule, and development of all marketing materials. Priorities for the first year of implementation include website development, partner outreach, community education, and cultivating media partners such as YPAC/KYVE.

2. *Planning and Development Committee*. The aim of this committee is to secure organizational and financial stability for the Gang Free Initiative, promote the mission of the GFI and ensures the representation of community needs and interests in routine plan updates. Also within the purview of this committee are the priorities described in the Organizational Change and Development strategy. Priorities for year one include facilities acquisition, coordination of fundraising activities, and oversight of the Resource Directory project.

3. *Implementation Committee*. The purpose of this committee is to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Community Action Plan. Additionally, this committee will oversee the Community Mobilization objectives as set forth later in this document. Priorities for the first year include identification of potential service providers and, working in tandem with the GFI Coordinator, negotiate partner agreements (MOU's, MOA's & Contracts) that will govern the delivery of services, and oversee the activities of the Intervention Team and outreach workers.

In addition to the three standing committees the Advisory Group may, from time to time, establish Ad Hoc committees or temporary workgroups to address specific issues. These committees will have a limited duration and may involve non-Advisory Group members referred to as Associates. In the first year of implementation the Advisory Group will establish a *Preferred Provider Network* **(PPN) Workgroup**. This workgroup will be responsible for the development of the Yakima GFI PPN Directory.

Finally, Advisory Group oversight will be provided by the *Executive Committee*. The Executive Committee provides leadership to the Advisory Group by ensuring the vision, mission and activities

of the GFI are fulfilled. The Executive Committee will include a minimum of two City Council Members, the Project Director, and GFI Coordinator.
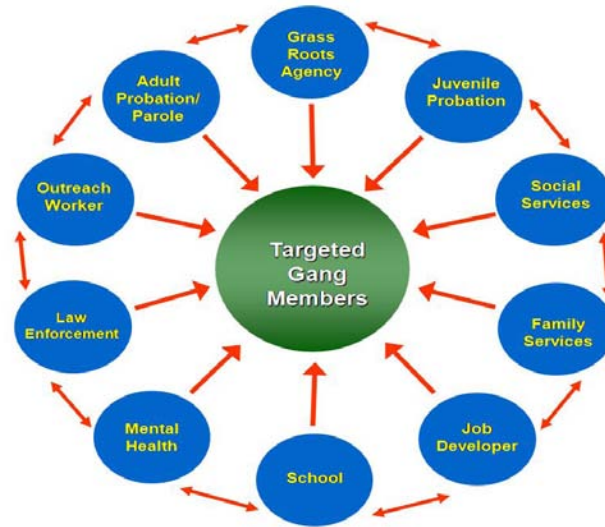
GFI Youth Development Team

The Youth Development Team is at the core of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model [Intervention] and plays a key role in identifying and delivering intervention and prevention services. This team is composed of a multidisciplinary group of professionals from the fields of law enforcement, probation, outreach, education, and social services, who work together to case manage the intervention targets of the action plan and to identify additional prevention, intervention, and suppression activities needed in the target communities. Participation on the Youth Development Team can increase the effectiveness of each agency's efforts, reduce duplication of services, increase access to needed services, and ensure that gang members are held accountable for their actions.

The Advisory Group should determine the composition of the Youth Development Team and assign representatives to serve on it. At a minimum, the following key agencies are crucial to an effective Youth Development Team and should be represented:

- Law enforcement representatives who are very familiar with local gang activity and the target community.

- Juvenile and adult probation/parole officers who will have frequent contact with project clients.

- School officials who can access student educational data for project clients and leverage educational services.

- Appropriate social service and/or mental health providers who can connect clients to services and provide outcome information to the team.

- A representative who can assist in preparing project clients for employment and place them in jobs.

- Outreach workers who can directly connect to project clients on the street, in their homes, or at school.

Other agencies may be asked to participate on an as-needed basis, including faith-based organizations, recreational projects, community development organizations, and grassroots organizations.

Youth Development Team activities will include:

- Creating individualized case management plans for gang members participating in the project.

- Engaging gang members in direct services to address their specific needs.

- Working together to dismantle or surmount barriers to accessing services.

- Holding gang members accountable for negative behaviors.

- Assisting gang members in transitioning out of the gang lifestyle.

- Improving the effectiveness of agencies serving gang-involved clients.

- Reducing overall gang-related crime in the community.

By identifying and providing concentrated services to those within the gang culture, the team's activities will also serve to improve the quality of life for all residents of Yakima by reducing gang crime and improving community safety.

Gang Free Initiative (YFDC) Coordinator

The recommended Coordinator position is viewed as instrumental to ensuring a successful implementation of the strategic actions included in this plan. The Coordinator will establish and maintain linkages between public and private partnerships ensuring effective utilization of resources directed toward the suppression of gang related crime and violence, intervening with gang-involved youth and their families enabling the eventual departure from the gang lifestyle, and prevention of future gang proliferation through coordinated youth development strategies. The position, whether contracted or secured as a position within the City of Yakima personnel structure is envisioned at an average of 40 hours per week up to 2080 hours per year.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The GFI Advisory Group, based on the understanding of the Yakima gang problem as identified in the Yakima Community Profile, has developed this Community Action Plan. The Plan is designed to meet the goals and objectives of the City of Yakima related to the reduction of gang crimes and violence as well as associated youth problem behaviors. The following narrative represents the recommendations of the GFI Advisory Group to the City of Yakima.

YOUTH AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER (YFDC)

The purpose of the Youth & Family Development Center (YFDC) is to establish a physical location from which centralized management and coordination functions supporting the implementation of the Community Action Plan would originate. In addition, the YFDC would function as the community's anti-gang "forum" or single point of access for information and services related to gang suppression, intervention and prevention.   The core function of the YFDC is to serve as the nucleus of the strategic actions described throughout this comprehensive anti-gang strategy. The YFDC would offer a variety of partner-driven services and activities including:

- Positive Youth Development Programming (e.g., Life Skills, Academic Enrichment, Career/Employment, Recreation.)
- Information Dissemination
- Outreach
- Referrals & Screening
- Individual Needs Assessments
- Multi-Family Groups
- Parent Development & Family Reunification
- Professional Development & Training

In addition, the YFDC would be home to the Youth Development Team, Yakima School District Truancy Center, and GFI Advisory Group whose functions are described in detail throughout this plan. It is the recommendation of the Advisory Group that the City of Yakima prioritizes the formation of a Youth & Family Development Center at one or more of the existing community centers and continues its support as a critical infrastructure item.

Yakima Truancy Center

The Yakima Truancy Center is a program designed to reduce school truancy among middle school and high school students in Yakima. The program will provide outreach, academic support, case management and family support in collaboration with the Yakima School District, Yakima County Juvenile Court, and the Yakima Police Department.

Participants in the program are students who have been identified by school authorities, law enforcement, or by representatives of juvenile court for their excessive truancy from school or for exhibiting behaviors that typically place students at risk for truancy. The case management services will focus on: 1) Helping students determine their academic and vocational goals, 2) Assisting

participants in creating plans to achieve those goals, and 3) Providing referrals to appropriate community resources.

In 2008 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy conducted a study on the effectiveness of targeted truancy and dropout programs in middle and high schools. Three types of programs show improvement in school outcomes: alternative programs (e.g., schools-within-schools), mentoring, and behavioral programs while no positive outcomes were found for alternative schools, academic remediation, or youth development programs. Alternative programs provide specialized instruction to a group of students within a traditional school, often separating them for at least some of their academic courses and integrating them with other students for elective classes. In this sense, alternative programs differ from alternative schools, in which the entire school day is spent in separate facilities that often include different rules and norms from traditional schools. Alternative programs had a positive effect on four outcomes—dropout, attendance, achievement, and graduation. The positive effects are due to a particular intervention model known as Career Academies. Career Academies are small learning communities within a larger school. They combine an academic and technical curriculum around a career theme (which differs based on local interest).

Effective truancy and dropout prevention programs have the following core service components: (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2009; OJJDP, 2006.)

- Academic remediation/ tutoring: Assess students' academic skill deficiencies and provide specialized or intensive instruction to improve competency.

- Career/technical education: Increase student awareness of the connection between school and work life, and teach technical skills (e.g., through vocational courses, employer internships, etc.).

- Case management: Problem-solve barriers to school success and refer student and family to community or other services, based on needs.

- Contingency management: Systematically reward desirable behaviors (e.g., on-time attendance) and punish undesirable behaviors (e.g., not completing homework).

- Counseling: Analyze and problem-solve barriers to school success, including personal, family, and social challenges, in a safe, supportive environment.

- Mentoring/advocacy: Provide students with a role model who supports their educational endeavors and advocates for their success in the school system.

- Monitoring attendance: Intensively track student attendance and follow up with student and parents to prevent tardies/absences.

- Parent outreach: Engage parents in identifying and solving their child's school problems; often families are referred to social or other supportive services.

- Youth development: Provide opportunity for skill-building, horizon expansion, competence, and resilience, and improve connections to school and positive adults.

- Referral services: Offer services that meet additional needs of the at-risk population served (e.g., childcare center/parenting classes, school-based health center).

The Truancy Center will incorporate 10 of the 10 core services.

Referral & Screening (Triage)

Additionally, the Advisory Group recommends that a referral and screening mechanism be established. Referral is an informal, ongoing process for reviewing information related to youth who show signs of being at risk of gang involvement or have been determined to be gang involved. The referral process includes Youth Development Team review of screening and other information on referred youth, and the Teams decision about whether to add the youth to the caseload.

Screening or "*Triage*" is a brief assessment of the youth's current status to determine individual and family priorities. It is important that team members create a protocol for screening and assessing new clients. Outreach workers present information about prospective youth to the team, outlining how each youth meets the screening criteria. The team members can then come to consensus about whether a youth is suitable for case management.

A screening team including outreach workers and members of the Youth Development Team should meet regularly to review the referral materials that have come in. The screening process may indicate the need to refer the youth to crisis services. Upon gathering all information and determining eligibility based on the established criteria, the screening team will make a determination. They will also take into consideration the ability of the program to serve the family based on current caseloads. A waiting list could be created in the future if we reach capacity.

Individual Needs Assessment

An individual needs assessment instrument should be developed to ascertain the status of each client when he is accepted into the project. The assessment instrument should be used for diagnosis, placement, and treatment planning and applicable in a variety of settings (i.e., school, jail, social service). The assessment should include information on:

- The client's future goals, abilities, talents, and desires.

- Family situation and structure.

- Gang involvement of family members.

- Other family issues that may affect the client's gang involvement.

- Criminal history.

- Gang history (and gang affiliation).

- School history, including special issues such as learning disabilities or a history of behavioral problems.

- Gang climate in the client's neighborhood.

- Substance abuse or mental health issues.

- History of abuse or neglect.

- Client's employment history and skill levels.

- Special circumstances, such as a client who is a teen parent.

- Agencies that are currently serving the client.

- Possible safety issues involving the client.

- Current needs assessments from any of the team agencies.

- Court requirements such as community service hours and restitution.

Outreach

Outreach activities within the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model play a critical role. The primary focus of the outreach services is to build an ongoing and pro-social relationship with youth and families while linking them to appropriate services. Targeted outreach will be established to focus on core gang involved youth, with special capacity to connect pre-adjudication and in the local community setting. Outreach activities such as recreation and arts will be carefully integrated with existing and new prevention services not to become a primary focus, but rather a means to build relationships with clients and provide access to essential resources and services.

Outreach will be a critical component to success of the YFDC.   Outreach workers will provide information that helps the entire team gain a better understanding of what is going on with the target population and in the target area so that team interactions with gang members will be more informed. Outreach workers will fill in blanks for others on the team who may not be as familiar with the individuals or groups being targeted. Workers may describe treatment needs or compounding factors (such as family violence, substance abuse, etc.) that are affecting a youth's behavior.

The Advisory Group recommends that outreach be conducted to include the following routine tasks:

- Identify youths' needs and goals to help the team develop a more comprehensive intervention plan.**

- Coach and provide role models for each youth.**

- Coordinate appropriate crisis responses to project clients following episodes of violence in the community.

- Provide assistance to families in distress, ranging from accessing basic services to helping resolve family conflicts.**

- Visit clients who are incarcerated and helping to reconnect them to services when they are released from custody.

- Resolve conflicts and/or mediating between clients, their families, other youth, and/or agencies.

- Act as a liaison between project clients and service providers/schools to facilitate client access to services.

- Work with clients who are seeking employment, from helping these youth develop résumés, to identifying their skills and qualifications, to helping them apply for jobs or work with workforce services programs.**

- Conduct gang awareness presentations in schools.**

**Indicates existing community resource

Multi-Family Group

The Advisory Group recommends that a major component of intervention include a variation of the Multi-Family Group (MFG) treatment modality that integrates aspects of family psycho-education, behavioral therapy and multiple-family approaches. In this context MFG will bring families of gang members or those at-risk of joining gangs together for learning and problem-solving, all oriented to the improved functioning both of the family member who's receiving services and the family unit as a whole.

The intervention begins with a minimum of three single-family engagement sessions, in which the patient's primary practitioner meets with the individual family, often without the youth present. These sessions are accompanied by separate meetings with the youth. When 5-8 families have completed the engagement process, the facilitators, usually including the youth's case manager, conduct an extensive educational workshop, with youths present. The social/emotional aspects of the gang culture are discussed, after which the practitioners present and discuss guidelines for the family management of everyday problems resulting from the youth's gang membership and problem behaviors.

The first meeting of the ongoing psycho-educational multi-family group follows the workshop by one or two weeks; its format includes a bi-weekly meeting schedule, 1 1/2 hour session length, leadership by two facilitators and participation by 5-8 youth and their families. In most instances, the decision to have a given youth attend is based upon his or her gang status and possibility for disruptive behavior such a group may provoke.

From this point forward, youth are strongly encouraged to attend and actively participate. The task of the facilitator, particularly at the beginning, is to adopt a business-like tone and approach that promotes a calm group climate, oriented towards learning new coping skills and engendering hope.

The MFG's primary working method is to help each family and patient to apply the family guidelines to their specific problems and circumstances. This work proceeds in phases whose timing is linked to the severity of gang involvement of the youth.   The approach maintains stability by systematically applying the group problem-solving method, case-by-case, to difficulties in implementing the family guidelines and fostering change.

Practitioners continue to use problem-solving and brain-storming in the MFG to identify and find jobs and social contacts with the youth, to find new ways to enrich their social lives. This process prepares the way for the patient to go on to work on behavior change, which occupies much of the final phase of the MFG process.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

The Advisory Group involves representatives of key organizations and other community leaders within the City of Yakima. It guides implementation of the Plan by responding to barriers to implementation, developing sound policy, lending support to the project where and when appropriate, and taking general ownership of the communitywide response.

The Advisory Group must also create and maintain interagency and community relationships that facilitate project development. Advisory Group members will work with residents in the target neighborhoods and community leaders to elicit their ideas and afford them a voice in identifying services and activities in the community. The committee will facilitate the development of community groups including but not limited to block watches, parent support groups, or other community alliances and coalitions.

Community residents in the target area(s) will be offered programs and training to educate parents, business owners, and neighborhood groups about gangs. In the first 3 years of implementation Community Mobilization efforts will focus on accomplishing the following strategic actions:

- Increase community partnerships to support expanded school/site-based behavior management.
- Increase student reporting of gang activity, bullying and assaults.
- Increase the community's awareness of the gang problem.**
- Identify and expand safe places for youth self expression (i.e., artistic, cultural, recreational).
- Decrease or prevent classroom overcrowding.
- Increase cultural awareness and tolerance.
- Expand opportunities for early non-violence education for youth.
- Expand truancy management to include neighborhood-based monitoring.
- Improve applied family management skills.**
- Enhance and expand single parent and nontraditional family support networks.
- Expand interagency cooperation.**
- Establish interagency coordinating entity.**
- Expand graffiti abatement with increased community partnerships.**
- Develop and implement anti-graffiti curriculum.
- Increase access and utilization of mental health services.**
- Establish annual awareness campaign targeting priority problem behaviors. (i.e., Kids Without Guns)
- Engage/increase community in reporting drug related juvenile offenses.
- Expand and enhance Gang/Drug Tip Hotline to include texting and social mediums. (i.e., Twitter)

- Increase Block Watch participation in target neighborhoods.**

- Expand and enhance neighborhood based volunteerism targeting youth development programming.**

- Educate and inform citizens how to report gang crimes.

**Indicates existing community resource

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISION

Opportunities Provision refers to the development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting at-risk and low level gang-involved youth. Special access to economic opportunities in the local and wider community must be provided for targeted youth including job-related education opportunities such as special educational and vocational skills and readiness training structured within regular schools, training programs, and mainstream job opportunities.

Education, training, and job opportunity strategies should be integrated with those of social service, particularly youth outreach work, along with close supervision and social control, as necessary. Grassroots, faith-based, and community youth agencies can be involved through the sponsorship of training, tutoring, remedial education, vocational, and job development/placement programs for targeted youth.

The City Administration and the City Council should prioritize funding of existing, effective, promising programs that establish targets for outcomes and outputs in a coordinated and collaborative manner with the City's funding source, i.e. Parks and Recreation, Police Department or private foundations. In addition, the City should enter into collaborative funding ventures only in instances where the partner has provided assurances regarding the use of evidence based programs and adherence with the core operating principles adopted by the GFI Advisory Group. The **Resource Directory** mentioned in the previous section is intended to create a neighborhood-based inventory of gang prevention and intervention programs and activities closely aligned with GFI's core operating principles and utilization of evidence-based programs. The directory may also assess which programs in the community have had internal or external evaluations completed and analyze evaluation results in order to develop criteria for future funding of promising prevention and intervention programs and activities.

The **Planning and Development** and **Implementation Committees** should work collaboratively in the priorities described above and in initiating activities that target the following strategic actions:

- Improve Parent/Youth communication.

- Increase utilization of modern technological mediums including social networking in anti-gang activities.**

- Increase personal discipline, leadership and team playing skills among Yakima youth.**

- Increase opportunities for personal story telling through drama, writing, talking circle as a means for healing, hope giving.**

- Identify and expand opportunities for youth self expression (i.e., artistic, cultural, recreational).

- Facilitate school reentry.**

- Expand structured out-of-school programming.**

- Expand gun safety education opportunities for youth.**

- Increase target youth understanding of risks associated with substance abuse/misuse.**

- Identify and expand youth supported suppression activities.

- Increase target youth understanding of risks associated with guns and violence.

- Identify and expand community supported suppression activities.

***Indicates existing community resource*

Prevention partnerships should focus on promoting programs that have outcomes that are effective and reflect a direct impact on gangs and at-risk youth's ability to make positive choices. Therefore, the Advisory Group should build capacity by having the City co-sponsor with local foundations workshops and community forums on evaluation methods and evidence-based programming. In addition, the GFI Advisory Group should establish criteria for providing endorsement with reviews every two years to make sure that partner agencies are responsive to changes within target service areas and clients.

Finally, the Steering Committee recommends that the City Administration and City Council strongly support the GFI's effort to set up coordinated partner driven activities in the targeted neighborhoods. Coordination should be institutionalized within every City department to include practices, partnerships and/or technology that will support positive youth development. In addition, the City should establish cross-departmental communication procedures with City Departments to proactively address gang issues. The Steering Committee further recommends that the City establish formal agreements with community based organizations (inclusive of Faith Based groups) that support the City's effort to effectively impact gang activity. City departments should work with community organizations to enhance funding applications. The Advisory Group will monitor progress and, through the Implementation Committee, regularly generate reports for the City's Public Safety Committee.

Intervention Priorities

A fully integrated behavioral health model is required in order to effectively intervene in the gang problem. This would include a partnership among schools, law enforcement, social and behavioral health services and outreach agencies. It is especially critical that outreach agencies work collaboratively with referral based agencies. Collaboration, rather than coordination, raises the partnership to a level of equal responsibility and advisement of recommended programs. Coordination alone often results in compartmentalizing each agency's role and leaves no one with a global understanding of the problem.

What is known about at-risk youth is that gang participation often begins in 5th or 6th grade. Because of the age factor, cognitive behavioral approaches are inappropriate and ineffectual. What we seek are culturally and developmentally appropriate interventions and the need for deeper engagement by schools in identifying at-risk youth. First generation parents, who may feel that participating in therapy for their family is unacceptable, often welcome school counselors' interventions. However, while school counselors may work with the residual effects of gang activity

(e.g., misbehavior, fights, inappropriate clothing, etc.) and are in a position to easily identify gang members, they are not working with outside agencies on gang issues, becoming a major barrier since the majority of Yakima's agencies are referral based. These agencies rely on clients either seeking assistance or being referred to them by other entities. This greatly limits the accessibility of services for people who are presently alienated from mainstream interventions. Additionally, the few agencies that are outreach-based do not appear to work closely with referral-based agencies. This is an important connection because as gang members are identified in outreach programs they may need to be referred to another agency better suited for the client's needs. If the two agencies do not collaborate, the client may feel that he is being passed off to another set of strangers, repeating the same personal information to a therapist who knows very little about him and his situation and thus he will be more likely to drop out of the program.

The following intervention actions are recommended by the Advisory Group:

- Expand trauma intervention services for victims, families and perpetrators.**
- Establish immediate response protocol for schools.
- Enhance and expand peer to peer support network.**
- Expand access to transitional support services.**
- Enhance and expand early learning practices to create school attachment or readiness.**
- Expand integrated youth monitoring system to include family, school liaison, and social/behavioral services network.
- Improve coordination between mainstream social/behavioral services and neighborhood associations.
- Increase application of diversion options with graffiti offenders.
- Decrease attitudes favorable to graffiti.
- Establish a youth violence court.**
- Enhance coordination between social/behavioral services and juvenile court.**
- Decrease youth attitudes favorable to weapons.
- Increase/improve outreach and referral rates with target youth.**
- Increase/improve outreach & referral rates with target youth (gang involved).**
- Expand and enhance gun and ammo surrender programs.**

**Indicates existing community resource*

The Advisory Group also recommends the development of a Youth Development Team to facilitate identifying youth who would benefit from the services made available via the YFDC.

SUPPRESSION

A strong targeted law enforcement presence was seen as fundamental to the mission of stemming violence. Targeting high-incidence areas and deploying the same officers to those areas for an extended period of time was considered essential. Effective suppression has been built on gathering and organizing intelligence information on youth gangs and their members. Increased intelligence coupled with specially trained law enforcement officers are better able to recognize gang problems and respond immediately. The specialized unit is also able to communicate with gang members in a positive way.

As the community continues to drive greater and more effective prevention and intervention efforts, the more costly suppression resources are better managed and deployed targeting the most

violent and chronic offenders. Furthermore, Police departments support prosecution by ensuring that judges are aware of the gang affiliations of defendants before sentencing. This translates into a more effective judicial process that reserves limited detention space for the most violent and chronic offenders.

Targeted Emphasis Patrols

The Steering Committee recommends the City of Yakima expand the Targeted Emphasis Patrols as they serve to increase visibility, and awareness that the police are in the area and prepared to act. Targeted Emphasis Patrols can be characterized as an increase in either the certainty or severity of official police reaction to gang activity in a specific area. Targeted Emphasis Patrols are proactive and have been effective in addressing general crime problems in addition to the gang targets in and around Yakima.

With the recently established Yakima County Gang Court, a multiagency approach to targeting current gang members with suppression measures while also targeting entire gangs with police suppression is now possible. Enhance coordination can be achieved through *Targeted Enforcement Teams* consisting of gang unit investigators, a probation officer, a deputy district attorney, and a district attorney investigator. The teams will work together to selectively incarcerate the most violent and repeat older gang offenders in the most violent gangs, enforce probation controls on younger, less violent gang offenders, and arrest gang leaders in "hot spots" of gang activity. Once offenders are identified, they are monitored closely for new offenses and undergo intensive supervision when on probation for violation of probation terms and conditions.

The following suppression actions are also recommended for the Targeted Enforcement Team by the Steering Committee:

- Expand perpetrator sanctions to include parents/legal guardians.
- Expand the application of immediate sanction as per protocols. (TBD)
- Expand and enhance truancy patrols and re-engagement strategies.
- Increase parental notification and response.**
- Increase citations for graffiti violations.**
- Identify and expand youth supported suppression activities.
- Improve overall public awareness and approval of suppression strategies.**
- Increase citations for weapons violations.**
- Increase # YPD Officers/1000 population to Western States Standard (1.8) or National Standard (2.4)—special emphasis on Gang Unit.**
- Identify and target top 10% most violent, chronic and serious juvenile drug offenders.
- Identify and target top 10% most violent, chronic and serious juvenile offenders.
- Expand routine emphasis patrols in high crime neighborhoods.**

**Indicates existing community resource

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

The policies and practices of organizations, particularly of agencies providing Intervention Team members and partnering in the provision of services must accommodate the goals and objectives of the Action Plan. Each program, agency, or community representative on the Advisory Group will ensure that its internal units are cooperating with one another and supporting the work of the Intervention Team.

Professional development and training for the Intervention Team will be conducted for the different types of team participants separately and collectively. Training will focus on data sharing, joint planning, and intervention activities. Special training, close supervision, and administrative arrangements will also be established for outreach workers and law enforcement to support their collaborative roles.

Organizational policies and practices should become increasingly inclusive and community-oriented. Awareness of the interests, needs, and cultural backgrounds of local residents and target youth will be emphasized throughout the change process. Driven primarily by the Advisory Group Planning and Development Committee, Organizational Change and Development activities will target the following strategic actions:

- Improve application of existing policies and procedures.

- Achieve 100% implementation and utilization of Anti-bullying Policies.

- Increase family participation in site-based school management. (PTO)**

- Expand and enhance Zero Tolerance policies targeting youth violence.**

- Increase PSA's promoting alternatives to truancy and academic failure.

- Institute Truancy Patrol and Transition Center.**

- Support the expansion and enhancement of Community Youth Development.

- Establish short-term, mobile art structures for youth.

- Establish a graffiti hotline.

- Increase laws applicable to weapons crimes.

- Implement county juvenile youth/gang court.**

- Establish formal mechanism for informing City Council.

- Enhance and expand (Prioritize) enforcement of existing drug laws.

- Assign Juvenile Probation Officer position to YPD

- Establish a clearly defined role for the City of Yakima and YPD in expansion of the juvenile courts to include a Gang Court.**

- Increase juvenile probation/parole capacity to meet city/county demand.

- Enhance and expand (Prioritize) enforcement of existing gun/weapons laws.

**Indicates existing community resource