



## **Gang-Free Communities Initiative Steering Committee**

*Adult Probation Department  
Bayview Community  
Defender's Office  
Bernal Heights Neighborhood  
Center  
Boys & Girls Clubs of San  
Francisco  
Brothers Against Guns  
Central American Resource  
Center  
Chinatown Beacon Center  
Community Bridges Beacon  
Center  
Community Youth Center  
Delinquency Prevention  
Commission  
Department of Children, Youth  
and Their Families  
Department of Public Health  
District Attorney's Office  
Edgewood Center for Children  
and Families  
HOMEY  
Huckleberry Youth Programs  
Community  
Assessment and Referral  
Center  
Instituto Familiar de la Raza  
Juvenile Probation Commission  
Juvenile Probation Department  
Mayor's Criminal Justice  
Council  
Mission Neighborhood Centers  
Morrisania West  
Public Defender's Office  
San Francisco Police  
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San Francisco State University  
San Francisco Unified School  
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Soul'd Out Productions  
Straight Forward Club  
Vietnamese Youth  
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Young Life/Providence Baptist  
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# **San Francisco Gang-Free Communities Initiative**

Gang activity represents a significant component of overall criminal activity within San Francisco. Conservative estimates indicate that gang crimes comprise ten percent of all crimes, one-sixth of all violent crimes and one-fifth of all serious violent crimes in the city of San Francisco. The San Francisco Gang-Free Communities Initiative was created to confront this problem, working both to reduce the level of gang-related crime, and to create alternatives and opportunities for individuals affiliated with gangs.

## ■ **OVERVIEW**

The San Francisco Gang-Free Communities Initiative is a citywide collaborative of stakeholders in the fields of juvenile justice and youth development, established in 2001 with a \$150,000 planning grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2002, the initiative was awarded an additional \$150,000 grant to implement the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Gang Model, which has five core components: community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organizational change and development.

## ■ **WHO WE ARE**

The collaborative is led by the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, the Juvenile Probation Department and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. The steering committee comprises representatives from law enforcement and the judiciary, city departments that serve youth and young adults, educational institutions and community-based organizations. Traditionally, collaboration and information-sharing opportunities between these institutions was limited, and there was a lack of common goals for gang-involved or at-risk youth. Bringing all of these stakeholders together to form a cohesive and productive collaborative is critical to the success of the intervention and suppression strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Gang Model.

## ■ **WHAT WE DO**

The steering committee's first task was to assess the situation on San Francisco's streets, and map out the problems and solutions for gang violence. This yearlong assessment process involved over 500 individuals and agencies, and included multiple layers of data collection and analysis that drew from neighborhood risk factor data, the San Francisco Unified School District's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, police data on overall crime and findings from the Gang Task Force, surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews. The resulting report provided crucial information on the risk factors for gang involvement, the impact of gang violence on affected communities and the barriers to solving the problem. The assessment

also produced a comprehensive list of community resources for gang-involved youth and their families.

Other efforts include the WrapAround Project, a community response to supporting victims of violent gang crime and their families managed in conjunction with San Francisco General Hospital, and the launch of the Critical Incidents Response Team in Bayview-Hunters Point and the Community Response Network in the Mission, both neighborhoods with high levels of gang activity.

The initiative has also met with success in leveraging additional sources of funding, including a four-year, \$237,000 per year grant from the California Department of Justice, and a \$300,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## ■ LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Planning and community mobilization to create and customize the structures for intervention teams in the Mission and Bayview-Hunters Point is already in progress. The intervention teams will unite city agencies that serve youth, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, police and other criminal justice organizations to provide outreach to gang-involved youth and their families, linking them to positive opportunities and relevant services. The teams will also be essential to the suppression activities integral to the Comprehensive Gang Model, providing supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth.

Continuing efforts include participation in the San Francisco Unified School District's response to school violence and in their efforts to reduce truancy, as well as work on finalizing the implementation plan for efforts in the Mission and Bayview-Hunters Point. A pilot project with the Department of Public Health to build capacity among community-based organizations for the provision of community-based mental health services is also planned.

In all these efforts, the initiative hopes to build positive relationships among community-based organizations, community members, law enforcement and juvenile justice agencies, and youth. The interests and needs of gang-involved youth will remain at the forefront, making an impact on the lives of individual gang members as well as the gangs, families and communities they are a part of.