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**PROBATION**  
**Technical Assistance Manual**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to an increasingly serious youth gang problem, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice entered into a cooperative agreement with the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, to conduct the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program. One of the objectives of this program was to develop technical assistance manuals for policymakers and administrators to assist them in their efforts to reduce gang violence.

This manual presents a comprehensive design for a probation response to youth gang activity in both emerging and chronic gang problem contexts. The manual covers a range of topics including: 1) assessing the youth gang problem; 2) setting goals, strategies, and objectives; 3) developing information systems; 4) conducting the pre-sentence investigation; 5) performing intake and probationer supervision; 6) facilitating interagency coordination and community mobilization; 7) selecting and training staff; and 8) designing program research and evaluation. Promising policies and procedures are recommended on each of these topics with reference to agency programming and the youth gang probationer.

A comprehensive probation assessment of the youth gang problem collects and analyzes data at three levels. At the first level, data is collected on probationers to determine their involvement in youth gang crime and the nature of the youth problem on the caseload. At the second level, information is obtained to assess whether probation is successful in regard to protecting the community, enforcing court orders, and achieving rehabilitative goals with respect to youth gang probationers. At the third level, a community-wide survey is undertaken to ascertain the nature and scope of the youth gang problem within the jurisdiction, and how probation and other organizations are working together to address it. The results of this assessment then serve as a basis for planning or adjusting probation's response to a youth gang problem, if one is present.

Pertinent agency goals should consist of: 1) furnishing the court with appropriate information and recommendations; 2) effectively enforcing court orders and applicable laws; 3) providing adequate assistance to criminal justice organizations, community agencies, and grassroots groups in their gang control efforts; and 4) brokering special school and employment opportunities for purposes of rehabilitation. A promising probation approach to youth gang activity will incorporate a multiple strategy approach. Strategies of suppression, social intervention, community mobilization, opportunities provision, and organizational development should be implemented by probation to craft a "balanced response." More specifically, the response should balance social control or supervision activities for youth gang probationers with the provision of viable social opportunities. To achieve this, certain organizational development objectives and activities to carry them out will have to be developed and implemented. Invariably, these objectives will be concerned with providing more effective supervision to youth gang probationers; increasing social support to youth gang probationers, their families and referral agencies; providing better social opportunities to youth gang probationers; and developing interagency partnerships and coalitions to improve the agency and community response to the problem.

Development of a gang intelligence system and a probation officer resource file will be necessary to effectively monitor the activities and provide for the social adjustment needs of the youth gang probationer. An effective gang intelligence system provides the probation officer with current, accurate information on the youth gang probationer's activity in the community and his or her probation conditions. The design and sophistication of the system should depend on

whether the jurisdiction has an emerging or chronic gang problem. Data concerning the youth's background, involvement in the gang, and violence potential should be collected. Reports on youth gang probationers, youth gangs and gang activity in the jurisdiction should be generated as needed. Appropriate system safeguards to protect the rights of the probationer and the validity of the information should also be established.

The resource file provides a listing of resources and services available in the community which the probation officer can utilize to effect intervention with the youth gang probationer. A good resource file will list a broad range of pertinent resource and service options related to physical and mental health, community service, education, employment, parental training, and recreation.

Guidelines must be stipulated pertaining to the content of pre-sentence investigation (PSI) reports and suggested dispositional recommendations for youth gang adjudicants. The PSI is important for many reasons including its ability to influence judicial decisions, its utility for developing a supervision plan, and its capacity to educate judges on gang-related topics. Beyond the regular information contained in the PSI, the probation officer should report on information related to the youth's gang activity, the youth's position and level of involvement in the gang, and the gang's current state of criminal activity. Questions concerning the impact that probation, incarceration, and other dispositional alternatives will have on the youth's commitment to the gang lifestyle should also be addressed. Certain recommendations by the probation officer should be made as a part of standard operating procedure when dealing with youth gang adjudicants. These include: 1) mandating special conditions of probation including non-association with *specific* gang members and prohibition of gang dress and other insignia; 2) requiring participation of the youth in specific educational, employment, and community service programs; and 3) recommending gang awareness and parental effectiveness training for the youth's parents when appropriate.

Functions and organizational arrangements necessary to competently perform intake on and supervise gang-affiliated youth require that intake officers be trained to identify youth gang members to ensure that they are appropriately processed. Guidelines which specify procedures for the detention, release or diversion of particular types of gang youth (e.g. peripheral, regular, hardcore) should be developed and placed in writing. A risk/needs assessment should be conducted to determine the level of supervision and the nature and intensity of services to be provided. The level of supervision should be directly related to the threat the youth poses to the community.

In initiating the supervisory relationship, conditions of probation and the consequences of their violation must be clearly explained to the youth and his or her parent(s). The probation officer must try to obtain information from the youth, parents, and significant others which is useful for the development of an appropriate case plan. The probation officer should display a high level of professionalism at all times and follow through on his or her commitments to the youth.

Several components should be regularly incorporated into the caseplans of youth gang probationers. Diagnostic, counseling, and treatment services should be provided to the youth to determine whether there are any particular problems present which are hampering the youth's development. Social skills training and support should be provided to prevent the youth's future involvement in gang activity. Participation in educational, vocational training, employment, and recreational opportunities should be stipulated to allow the youth to develop viable skills and positive social networks. Provision of assistance to family members or significant others should be considered to improve the youth's home setting. In developing a caseplan, the probation



officer should attempt to minimize the time the youth has available to become involved in gang activity.

To adequately supervise the youth gang probationer, the probation officer may have to utilize several strategies. These can include the use of special gang-related conditions of probation, curfew restrictions, and mandatory drug testing. Visits to the probationer at home and with collateral contacts at school, work, and other places may also be useful. In special cases, the probation officer may require search and seizure authority or have to place the youth under home detention and electronic surveillance. Supervisory networks with other agency personnel can also be established. In handling probation violations, consequences should be imposed immediately and directly proportional to the seriousness of the violation. Finally, the structure and process of supervision should differ according to whether the area is an emerging or chronic gang problem context. In general, supervisory arrangements should be less structured and utilize existing programs in emerging gang problem contexts; in chronic gang contexts supervisory arrangements should be more intensive, and special programs specifically for gang youth may need to be created.

At the heart of improving cooperation between probation and other agencies is the identification of mutually beneficial activities which fulfill organizational mission objectives. Several reciprocal activities can be identified which are beneficial to both probation and other criminal justice organizations including the police, prosecutor, public defender, the court, detention, corrections, and parole. These include the sharing of gang-related intelligence and information, identifying gang youth, jointly developing caseplan and dispositional recommendations, and providing gang-related training. Probation can also carry out a number of advantageous interagency activities with other organizations such as schools, community-based youth agencies, grassroots organizations, churches, business and industry, and the media. These include sharing gang-related information, joint monitoring of probationer behavior, training on gang-related topics, the provision of pertinent services and opportunities for gang youth, and advocacy for additional resources.

Probation should also attempt to form an interagency coalition to develop a community mobilization agenda. Potential collaborative activities could involve advocating for recognition of the gang problem if denial is present, developing a definitional and policy consensus with respect to the issue, creating intelligence and supervisory networks to improve interagency communication, conducting community education campaigns, and promoting resource development and political advocacy.

Certain human resource tasks must also be addressed to successfully administer a probation gang program. These tasks include developing a job description, screening and selecting candidates, and providing appropriate orientation and training. Job descriptions should incorporate requirements directly related to probation gang work. These include having a demonstrated understanding of and ability to work with gang youth, a willingness to work variable hours, and an interest in spending a substantial amount of time in the community. The rigors and challenges of the position must be clearly explained to all job candidates. Once hired, the probation officer should be oriented to the functions and operations of the gang position or program, particularly in regard to its structure and design, policies and procedures, and interorganizational relationships. Training topics should include characteristics of local gangs, patterns of gang crime, officer safety issues, and crisis intervention strategies and techniques.

Finally, program research and evaluation are necessary to assess the results of a probation approach to gang activity. Process evaluation indicators should be developed which measure the

extent to which the approach is implemented. These indicators should assess: 1) the quality of gang intelligence; 2) probation officer case reports; 3) enforcement of gang-related conditions; 4) level of supervision and services provided to youth gang probationers; 5) community mobilization efforts by probation officers; and 6) management of staff. Outcome indicators should be developed to measure the results of the program. Particular emphasis should be placed on whether the approach is reducing recidivism by gang probationers; youth assigned to different dispositional tracks have different recidivism rates; and gang crime rates have declined in the targeted communities.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Program Mission and Background  
Purpose of the Manuals  
Problem Statement  
Discussion of Terms and Issues  
Approach to the Problem  
Summary

#### Program Mission and Background

*There has been an increase in the youth gang problem and the need for information and guidance.*

Criminal youth gang activity represents a serious threat to the safety and security of local citizens and impedes positive youth development. In recent years higher levels of youth gang violence and gang member-related drug trafficking have been reported in an increasing number of neighborhoods, high schools, public housing projects, correctional institutions and other social contexts throughout the country. Police in small towns have begun to identify "gangs" and are requesting assistance in how to deal with them.

In response, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Justice Department entered into a cooperative agreement with the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago in October, 1987 to conduct the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program. This program was initiated as a four stage Research and Development process: Assessment, Prototype/Model Development, Technical Assistance, and Testing.

*This technical assistance manual is part of a four stage research and development process.*

Three of the four stages have been completed. Stage 1 included a comprehensive review of the research and program literature on youth gangs, a survey of programs in 45 cities, selected site visits, conferences, and special studies. During Stage 2 gang suppression and intervention models were produced for police, prosecutors, judges, probation, corrections, parole, schools, employment, community based youth agencies, grass-roots organizations. Additionally, separate manuals for comprehensive planning and for community mobilization were developed.

*Twelve manuals have been produced.*

Stage 3 involved the creation of 12 technical assistance manuals which provide guidelines to implement the policies and procedures presented in the models. The ten agency manuals specify both organizational and community perspectives for dealing with the youth gang problem. The other two manuals outline specific procedures and processes of planning a comprehensive community approach to youth gang suppression and intervention. (See Appendix A for a list of

documents.)

*Certain processes were used to develop the manual.*

The program models and technical assistance manuals were based on the findings of the initial project assessment stage as well as extensive consultations with policymakers, administrators and practitioners at local and national levels. Law enforcement, particularly front line gang specialists, were important from the start of the program in identifying the problem. Two regional conferences were held with policymakers and administrators as well as practitioners from 16 cities who contributed to the development of the final version of the manuals.

### **Purpose of the Manuals**

*The purpose is to present a set of guidelines to reduce youth gang crime.*

The purpose of the technical assistance manuals is to present detailed steps for the control and reduction of youth gang crime, especially gang-motivated violence. The manuals seek to provide governmental authorities, criminal justice organizations, social agencies, and community groups with strategies which encourage gang-prone and gang-involved youth to terminate criminal activity and participate in legitimate social, academic, and employment pursuits.

Broad preventive policies which deal with larger social issues such as poverty and racism, housing, education, jobs, and health care are addressed only on a limited basis in the manuals. Key issues of family breakdown, violence in the media, and the proliferation of sophisticated weapons need to be directly addressed as they contribute to the youth gang problem. They are presented here mainly as contextual conditions that special organizational policies and procedures and community mobilization must deal with and change, if not directly then indirectly.

*Administrators and policymakers are the primary audience.*

Local administrators and policy makers are the primary audience, but the manuals should also be useful to other officials and personnel concerned with the problem, including agency supervisors, front-line workers, and community volunteers.

The manuals are not intended to serve in the place of more general models and manuals dealing with delinquent or troublesome youth in the criminal justice and human service fields; they are intended as a supplement to them. Even so, the manuals should be of value in addressing youth crime more generally. This is so because the youth gang problem can be viewed as part of a larger set of crime and delinquency and youth socialization problems.

## Problem Statement

*The gang problem has changed and grown more serious in most regions of the country.*

During the 1980s and early 1990s, more criminally oriented and better organized gangs or cliques have become prevalent in many urban and smaller communities. More young people from diverse backgrounds and settings are joining gangs to meet social and economic needs not satisfied through existing institutions, e.g., family, school, and employment. The youth gang has become an alternative mainly anti-social institution for an increasing number of youth.

*Poverty and social disorganization are key conditions contributing to the problem.*

Why youth gangs have developed and become more criminal and complex organizations is not clear. The type and severity of youth gang problems may be largely a response to two conditions, *poverty* or limited access to social opportunities and *social disorganization*, i.e., the lack of integration and stability of social institutions including family, school and employment in a local community.

Certain factors exacerbate these two social conditions to produce varying gang subcultures and systems. They include:

- ▶ large and rapid population movement of low income minorities into a community;
- ▶ intergenerational gang traditions;
- ▶ defects of social policy and coordination of service delivery at local and national levels;
- ▶ institutional racism;
- ▶ insecurities of certain working and middle class populations "threatened" by newcomers;
- ▶ the growth of criminal opportunities; and
- ▶ possibly, influence of the media.

Examples are the following:

*Under different community conditions, different types of gang problems appear to develop.*

Violent youth gang subcultures often develop when gang-affiliated African American and Hispanic youth move from central cities to smaller cities and suburban areas without adequate social, family, economic, and educational supports. Violent gang subcultures may also develop when new waves of poor immigrants from Mexico, Central America, the Pacific Islands, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Korea, Philippines and other Asian countries arrive in urban communities. The newcomer groups are often met with hatred and resentment, sometimes manifested in physical attacks. Gangs may form and become rapidly entrenched, first as defensive, and then as offensive groups.

Furthermore, in ghetto, inner city African-American and Hispanic communities, a limited criminal opportunity system often develops. Gangs in these communities may change from

status-oriented, conflict groups and assume a highly predatory, criminal-gain character. Over time, sophisticated instrumental rather than traditional or status-oriented youth gangs may develop, with special interest in drug trafficking and other economic criminal activity.

*There are variations in the gang problem by race/ethnicity, class, and newcomer status.*

In some communities across the country, particularly in the western states but increasingly elsewhere, the influx of low income and working class Pacific-Islander and Asian groups e.g., Tongan, Filipino, Hong Kong, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, or Cambodian, has resulted in other varieties of youth gang problems. Second generation youths, born in this country or who arrived as pre-teens, may seek protection, prestige, and income through gang membership. Some of these gangs adopt African-American or Hispanic gang patterns; others become closely connected to traditional ethnic-based, adult criminal organizations. Criminal activities can include home invasions, business extortion, robbery, rape, intimidation and a range of racket activities.

These newcomer youth gangs, and the Asian communities upon which they prey, are difficult for local law enforcement, schools, and community organizations to penetrate or influence because of cultural, communication, and trust problems.

*Growing economic, social, and cultural pressures can contribute to the development of youth gangs.*

Some blue-collar or middle class communities are characterized by growing economic, social and cultural pressures as well as by increasing family or personal disorganization. Some of these formerly stable, predominately white communities have become centers for youth groups with a "nothing to lose attitude." Youth gangs or their equivalent such as Satanic, Stoner, punk rocker, hate, Neo-Nazi, or racist Skinhead groups may participate in a wide range of loosely organized criminal acts, characterized by perverse and negative behavior, including vandalism, drug use, homosexual assaults, and even homicides.

Additionally, in certain stable, lower middle class communities, whether African-American, Latino, Pacific Islander, Asian, white, or Native American, the gang problem may assume a more organized and usually less violent character. Youth may become relatively more involved in extortion, car theft, burglary, robbery, sophisticated drug trafficking, and various lucrative quasi-racket activities which are not necessarily conducted in the "home communities." Legitimate business and criminal interests may be relatively well integrated.

Furthermore, specialization of criminal youth gang patterns by race and ethnicity seemingly exists. Economic, social and cultural factors may, in fact, be the cause. Thus, some African-American youth gang or clique members may be

heavily engaged in street level crack-cocaine trafficking; Mexican-American youth gang members may be relatively more involved in violent turf based activity, and Asian gang members may be more mobile and closely related to adult crime organizations involved in crimes such as extortion, robbery, and international drug trafficking.

However, these youth gang subcultures also exist side by side, interact, integrate with, or succeed each other over time. In some communities youth gangs are inter-racial and inter-ethnic.

*Violence projected by the media may exacerbate the problem.*

In spite of the many and changing varieties of gang subcultures which can be found, a common denominator among them is that most of these groups are comprised of youth who share somewhat similar values and a keen sense of personal failure and low self-esteem. For many gang youth, violence has become an acceptable way of life, partially sanctioned by the larger society. Violence is seen on nightly newscasts, in the movies, on evening television and Saturday morning cartoons, and encouraged by certain "rap" stars. Violence is projected as a means of resolving authority, low self-esteem and race/ethnic problems.

#### **Discussion of Terms and Issues** (See also Appendix B Glossary)

*Key components of the problem are the youth gang, youth gang member, and the gang incident.*

It is important to accurately identify key components of the youth gang problem in order not to exaggerate, deny, or mythologize them. This is necessary in order to develop appropriate policies and procedures to deal with the different or varying street gang problems and subcultures encountered. These components are: 1) the criminal youth gang, 2) the youth gang member, and 3) the gang incident.

*Gang-motivated violence is the key but not exclusive concern of the manual.*

The central focus of the manuals is control and reduction of gang-motivated violence. We are not primarily interested in ephemeral delinquent groups or in highly organized drug trafficking by groups concerned only with profit, although there are often important connections between these associations and the youth or street gang. However, we are concerned with predatory youth cliques or drug trafficking groups to the extent they participate in, depend on, and influence the development of violent gang activities.

Youth gang members engage increasingly in both violent status-related as well as entrepreneurial or predatory criminal activities. If a youth group engages primarily in criminal entrepreneurial activity and participates periodically in serious violence, it falls within the scope of our concern.

Our concern is also with differences between emerging and

chronic gang problem communities and the need for prevention and especially early intervention services.

### 1. Criminal youth gang

This is a group often comprising both juveniles and young adults in regular interaction with each other who engage in a range of social and anti-social behaviors. Cliques or members engage repetitively or at times spontaneously in violent, predatory, and criminal gain behaviors. The criminal youth gang may be located within a neighborhood or across neighborhoods and even cities. It may be loosely or well organized with established rules of conduct. The youth gang may have a name, turf, colors, signs, symbols and distinctive dress. The youth gang often promotes mutual support among members and conflict with competing gangs or established authority.

*The traditional youth gang is turf-based and status-oriented, but other kinds of gangs have also developed.*

*Many of these groups are traditional turf based gangs. Traditionally, the primary function of the youth gang has been to establish or protect the group's reputation and status within a framework of shared or communal values. This continues to be true for many youth gangs today. Some youth gangs, however, do not display colors and are not primarily concerned with social status, but are more gain oriented and more rationally organized.*

### 2. The Youth Gang Member

*While the criminal youth gang includes some youth who conform primarily to conventional norms; many, however, engage in a range of criminal behaviors.*

*The focus of concern is the youth gang member 12 to 24 years of age.*

Most gang participants are in the age range of 12 to 24 years. Some pre-adolescents as well as persons into their 50s have been reportedly engaged in gang activities. However, the most serious and violent gang activity tends to be committed by older adolescents and young adults. Some gang members may join for a period as short as a day, a week, or a month; others are members for years. Some members move from low to high gang status, from less serious to more serious criminal gang behaviors, and vice versa, sometimes in different gangs.

*Fewer females than males are gang members.*

Far fewer females than males join youth gangs, although with the increase in number of gangs throughout the country more female members are probably involved in serious youth gang activities than in an earlier era. Available evidence indicates, however, that females usually join gangs later and leave earlier, and are usually involved in less violent or serious criminal behavior than males. About 9 times as many males as females are arrested for gang crimes according to several studies. Less than one percent of gang homicide offenders are



*Attention needs to be directed to high risk female gang members.*

female.

Female members typically are in groups affiliated with male gangs. Sometimes females are integrated directly as members into the gang proper, and are less frequently involved in independent all-female criminal youth gangs. There is some recent evidence that females have assumed leadership roles in certain gang or criminal group activities, such as drug trafficking, in a few cities. Special attention needs to be directed to high risk female gang members who are likely to be physically and sexually victimized, or who induce or facilitate male gang member assaults against other gangs.

Traditional gangs may have different type of members: identifiable leaders, core, regular, associate, soldier, peripheral, wannabe, floater, veteran or old-head. The presence and definition of these categories of gang members, however, may be quite variable or defined differently in communities across the country. Of special interest, for purposes of control and prevention are two categories of gang youth: 1) the more serious, hardcore, often older gang youths, and 2) the younger, high risk, often less committed gang youths.

*Different types of gang members should be carefully identified.*

Agencies need to carefully identify gangs and gang members. This process should depend on use of *multiple* criteria such as gang member self-admission, statements by reliable witnesses, verification by a second independent agency source, prior police records and the youth's regular association with a known gang member. Participation by the youth in certain serious gang-motivated criminal incidents such as drive-by shootings must ordinarily precipitate a gang member identification process for gang suppression and intervention purposes.

### 3. The Gang Incident

A gang incident is the unit for classifying and reporting an event as a gang crime, especially for law enforcement purposes. Reported gang incidents become the basis for determining whether a gang problem exists and assessing its scope, and thereby the nature and extent of the community response to it.

*Different definitions of the gang incident exist.*

The gang homicide is usually the key and most reliable measure of the seriousness of gang crime. However, identification of gang incidents, e.g., homicide, assault, or robbery, is neither a simple nor a standard procedure. Two different procedures or variations of them, are currently employed to determine whether a gang incident has occurred and should be recorded for law enforcement, and, consequently, public policy purposes.

*The gang-motivated definition focuses on the nature of the criminal act.*

- Gang-Motivated

In this procedure, according to the Chicago Police Department, a criminal act is defined as a gang incident if it grows out of gang motivation, interest, or specific circumstances which enhance the status or function of the gang. These acts include: inter-gang violence, gang retaliation, turf protection, intimidation, robbery, recruitment, or other criminal activity which affects the gang's reputation or interests as a whole. One or more members of the gang may be involved as a suspect, witness, offender or victim in these circumstances. In classifying the incident, focus is on the nature of the specific situation in which the illegal act occurs, such as a drive-by shooting or yelling a gang slogan in the course of the crime.

Crimes such as burglary, car theft, prostitution, and drug trafficking by a gang member are problematic because it is hard to determine whether the act is gang-motivated. Many criminal acts serve individual member needs unrelated to gang interests. On the other hand, seemingly individual or self-serving crimes by gang or aspiring gang youth may be gang-motivated. For example, a youth may be required or feel compelled to commit a particular property or person crime because of pressures by the gang.

- Gang-related

*The gang-related definition focuses on identification of the criminal suspect as a gang member.*

This procedure, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, is based on the characterization of a crime or delinquent act as a gang incident when the suspect, offender or victim is a gang member, regardless of gang motivation or circumstances. Usually any serious criminal act, especially of a violent, predatory, or drug trafficking nature, in which a gang member is involved, can be classified as a gang incident. For example, the crime of a gang member who steals from a store - even though that act has nothing directly to do with his gang membership - would be classified as a gang-related incident. (See Appendix B for a discussion of mixed situations and erroneous classification of group delinquency as gang crime.)

- Which Definition to use

*The narrow gang-motivated definition avoids excessive labelling.*

The argument in favor of using the gang-motivated definition is that it focuses sharply on the circumstances of the incident rather than the identification of the individual as a gang member. It may be more precise and valid than the gang-related definition. It withstands court challenges better. It also avoids excessive labelling or exaggeration of the gang problem.

The counter argument is that the gang-motivated definition minimizes the actual scope of the gang crime problem. It may

encourage organizational or community denial of the problem. A key assumption of the proponents of the gang-related definition is that a gang member is likely to engage in a wide range of serious crimes because gang membership predisposes him or her to do so. Evidence for this argument is not substantial, however.

*The gang-related definition may be more useful to criminal justice officials.*

Police and prosecutors generally believe that it is desirable to identify gang members and their activities as completely as possible. Police are particularly concerned that the full range of criminal activities of the gang member be available for efficient tracking and investigation purposes.

We recommend a procedure that avoids excessive labelling of youth but ensures protection of the community. A gang-incident procedure should be devised which records and distinguishes between gang-motivated and non-gang-motivated crime committed by the gang member. All serious criminal incidents by repeat gang offenders should be clearly "flagged" on criminal justice computer systems. An effective computerized information system permits use of either or both procedures to track gang-motivated incidents and gang member crime.

#### 4. Gang Problem Contexts, Chronic and Emerging

*Emerging and chronic gang problem contexts may require different suppression and intervention approaches.*

With the growth and spread of the youth gang problem, a two-fold categorization of the problem context has come into use: Chronic and Emerging. Our manuals stress the differences in these contexts as a basis for the development of distinctive strategies, policies and procedures for gang suppression and intervention. Simply put, a more preventive or early intervention approach may be required in the emerging gang problem context, while a more elaborate and formalized suppression, intervention and prevention approach may be necessary in the chronic context.

- Chronic Gang Problem Context

*The gang problem has had a longer history and is usually better organized and more severe in the chronic context.*

Such an organizational or community context is characterized by persistent or periodic crises of major gang member violence and sometimes related drug trafficking extending over a five to ten year or more period, or even decades. Youth gangs are usually better organized in such communities which are often located in larger or older cities. These contexts are likely to be found in impoverished, ghetto, or transitional areas or ports of entry of inner cities, although they are increasingly found in smaller cities and suburban communities.

- Emerging Gang Problem Context

*The gang problem is recent, less well organized, but sometimes very serious in the emerging context.*

This organizational or community context is characterized by less well organized and persistent but at times serious forms of gang violence and gang member drug trafficking. The gang problem has usually been present and/or recognized for about five years or less. To some extent, the development and spread of the problem may be traced to the influence of new settlers or gang crime entrepreneurs for example, drug traffickers, from chronic problem cities or contexts. Youth gangs in emerging problem areas tend to be fewer in number and most often evolve out of local delinquent, sometimes social groups under deteriorating economic or social situations for minority, newcomer, or socially isolated populations.

The distinction between the concepts of chronic and emerging gang problem communities, however, are not sharp. Indicators related to the onset of the problem, its duration, degree of gang organization, severity of gang violence and related gang member drug trafficking, as well as the appropriate response to the problem(s) are not neatly categorized by the terms "chronic" and "emerging".

Emerging gang problem communities may develop into chronic; and chronic gang problem communities may go through periods of sharply diminished gang activity before the problem re-emerges. Different parts of a community or jurisdiction may be characterized by different stages or degrees of severity of the problem at a given time.

#### 5. Variability of Violent Gang, Drug Trafficking and Crime Problems

It is important to understand that, despite media and law enforcement claims, youth gangs involved in gang violence are not necessarily involved in drug trafficking. A direct and causal relationship between youth gangs and drug trafficking has not yet been demonstrated. Some communities which have high levels of youth gang violence may have relatively low levels of drug trafficking; other communities with high levels of drug trafficking may have low levels of youth gang activity.

We observe that over the last several years, Los Angeles and Chicago, with the highest levels of gang homicide in the country and very high levels of drug trafficking, report that less than five percent (5%) of gang homicides are associated with drug trafficking. Drug trafficking appears to be related to serious violent street gang behavior only in a limited sense. Drug trafficking, nevertheless, may succeed and may under certain conditions serve either to diminish or increase patterns of youth gang violence.

*High levels of general crime and*

Finally, high levels of general criminality in a community do

*gang crime are not necessarily closely associated.*

*Secondary prevention is included in the manuals' perspective.*

*Different strategies of suppression and intervention have been identified.*

*Community mobilization is critically important.*

not necessarily indicate high levels of gang activity. Some cities with the highest levels of youth homicide and drug trafficking may have relatively limited youth gang activity.

## 6. Prevention

The focus of this and the other technical assistance manuals in our Research and Development program is on issues of intervention and suppression in contexts where the gang problem is clearly present. Here, prevention refers mainly to secondary forms of prevention, or early intervention, which reduces the likelihood that highly gang-prone or the younger gang member will commit or continue to commit gang crimes. This is to be accomplished through effective controls, direct treatment or services, and provision of legitimate opportunities. In our conception, prevention requires change and development both by the individual youth as well as his or her social environment.

Most youth from low income and social problem ridden communities are not involved in delinquent gang activities. Finally, we note that a simple prevention model which emphasizes exclusive concern with younger youth may be unsuccessful. Such a model does not take into consideration system effects, including the extensive socialization effects of older youth on "wannabe" or younger youth. All key components of the problem need to be systematically addressed.

## **Approach to the Problem**

The manuals specify five major lines of action or strategies: *community mobilization, opportunities provision, suppression, social intervention, and organizational change and development.* These strategies must be combined in different ways depending on the problem context, the specific mission of the organization, and the kind of youth targeted for special attention.

### 1. Community Mobilization

Community mobilization is a necessary and primary strategy in socially disorganized communities. Social disorganization, which contributes to the development of criminal youth gangs, may be characterized by the inability of legitimate institutions such as home, school, and employment, to adequately socialize youth. It may also be characterized by limited networking among agencies or the fragmentation of criminal justice or community service delivery systems, within and across communities.

Both local and federal interests must be mobilized for the development of collaborative community and interagency activities directed at the control and reduction of the youth gang problem. In times of limited local community resources, agency consortia efforts are essential. These should include the full and productive use of combined local, state and federal resources, application of moral and political pressures, and participation by the local citizenry. (See also General Community Design and Community Mobilization manuals.)

## 2. Opportunities Provision

*The opportunities provision strategy focuses on the importance of education, training, and jobs for high risk gang-prone and gang member youth.*

The provision of additional social opportunities, i.e., the development of a variety of targeted educational, training, and employment programs, is the second most important component over the long term for the reduction and prevention of the youth gang problem, particularly in chronic contexts. The schools need to provide remedial and enriched educational programs for gang-prone and hardcore gang youths.

Education, training, and jobs are especially critical for older gang youth still in gangs who are not in school but who are at "positive risk" at a certain point in their social maturation for leaving the gangs, or for decreased participation in criminal gang activity. A key objective of these programs should be developing socially-competent youth, whether in or out of school. (See School and Employment manuals.)

## 3. Social Intervention

*Social intervention is based on an "outreach" and linkage approach of gang youth to the conventional society.*

Youth serving agencies and grass-roots community groups must "reach out" and act as a link between gang youth and the conventional world. Staff or adult volunteers of these organizations must develop meaningful relationships with these youth. Community based youth agencies should facilitate access to pertinent opportunity systems and exercise social controls which contribute to the socialization of gang youth. Special efforts are also required to coordinate services for these youth. (See Community Based Youth Agency manual.)

## 4. Suppression

*The strategy of suppression is defined in broad social control terms and requires more than the involvement of criminal justice agencies.*

Social control procedures, particularly those of criminal justice, but also of community based agencies, are essential for community protection and the prevention and reduction of the problem. Youth gang suppression involves not only law enforcement but a variety of other agencies and community groups in the targeting, monitoring, supervision, and if necessary, restraint of gang offenders. It also requires the anticipation, prevention, and limitation of the effects of gang crime in particular situations to protect both youth participants and the community.

*Criminal justice strategies must also include community mobilization, social intervention, and opportunities provision.*

*Organizational development and change focuses on better use of internal agency resources to deal with the youth gang problem.*

*Targeting of certain communities, gang, and gang members is necessary to make the best use of limited resources for dealing with the problem.*

However, arrest, prosecution, imprisonment, and close supervision of gang youth are insufficient unless joined with other community-oriented strategies to achieve long term impact on the problem. This means that community based agencies and local groups must accept and collaborate with criminal justice agencies in patrol, surveillance, and certain information sharing under conditions which protect both youth and the community. Police, prosecution and other criminal justice agencies must develop a variety of social intervention, opportunities, prevention and community involvement programs to supplement their primary goal of suppressing gang crime. (See especially Police, Prosecution and Probation manuals.)

Furthermore, policymakers, administrators and practitioners in the criminal justice system have a special responsibility to withstand pressures from the public and other units of the justice system to carry out an exclusive strategy of suppression to deal with the youth gang problem.

#### 5. Organizational Change and Development

Finally, the above strategies need to be appropriately organized based on the nature and scope of the problem in the community and the mission of the particular organization. Organizational development and change require better use and reallocation of available resources within agencies and neighborhoods. Common definitions, improved communication, resident involvement and coordination within as well as across agencies and communities are also required.

Both community mobilization and organizational development strategies whether in emerging or chronic gang problem contexts, should be closely interrelated to create efficient and cohesive system arrangements for dealing with the gang problem.

#### Targeting

To conserve resources and most effectively deal with the youth gang problem, it is important to target certain communities, organizational contexts, gangs and gang members or gang-prone youth. Special emphasis on community mobilization is required in both emerging and chronic gang communities. Opportunity provision must also be emphasized for chronic problem communities and contexts.

Neighborhoods and organizations, particularly schools, experiencing serious gang problems, should be priority targets for suppression and intervention efforts. The most serious gang problem youths in the most violent gangs in the highest gang crime rate areas should be targeted first.

*High gang crime neighborhoods, certain types of gangs, and gang members should receive priority attention.*

Certain youth gangs or gang-like groups clearly committed to violent and serious criminal activity should receive priority attention. This is to avoid unnecessary labelling and widening the net of gang delinquency and crime through inappropriate criminal justice and community based agency attention. It is important to concentrate resources on the heart of the presenting problem.

Also, individual youth should be targeted in the following order of priority purposes:

*Key targets of community agency and grassroots attention should be leadership and core gang as well as high risk gang-prone youths.*

✓ *first, leadership and core gang youths--to disrupt gang networks, protect the community, and facilitate the reintegration of these youths through community based or institutional programming into legitimate pursuits;*

✓ *second, high risk gang-prone youth who are often younger or aspiring gang members who give clear indication of beginning participation in criminal gang activities -- to prevent further criminal gang involvement through early intervention, preferably community based services, and*

✓ *third, regular and peripheral gang members--to generally address their needs for control and intervention services.*

Finally, a caution! The policies procedures and steps recommended in the manuals should be viewed as promising but as yet not systematically researched through field testing.

### **Summary**

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Justice Department, entered into a cooperative agreement with the School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, to conduct the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program. The scope and seriousness of the problem was analyzed from both an organizational and community perspective. Models or prototypes were developed. Technical Assistance manuals were created which focussed on the implementation of policies and procedures in emerging and chronic gang problem communities and contexts.

The manuals address the gang problem in terms of critical characteristics of the youth gang, its members and the way the problem is defined. Focus is on controlling, reducing, as well as preventing gang-motivated violent and serious criminal youth gang activity. The mission of suppression and intervention is specified as requiring five key strategies:



community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression and organizational change and development. Key targets of a program should be gang leaders and core members as well as high risk gang-prone youth. This particular manual focuses on organizing local citizens and groups in a cooperative effort at the point of problem impact.

I.S.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROBATION

- The Youth Gang Problem: A View from Probation
- Purpose and Content of this Manual
- Assessing the Youth Gang Problem
- Summary

#### **The Youth Gang Problem: A View from Probation**

*Youth gang probationers pose a serious threat.*

Probation departments in small and large metropolitan areas across the nation are increasingly confronted with gang-affiliated youth on their caseloads. These youth gang probationers often pose a serious threat to the community because of their involvement in gang-related violence and drug trafficking. Research also indicates that a significant number of these gang youth are at great risk of becoming career criminals.

*Several obstacles may confront probation.*

Probation may be hindered by a number of constraints. In jurisdictions where the gang problem is just emerging, key power brokers such as the police, city officials, and business leaders may deny that a youth gang problem exists. Probation may also not have the expertise or the organizational resources necessary to respond appropriately. In other jurisdictions, where youth gangs have existed for some time, the problem may be so chronic, in terms of the severity of violence and the proportion of hard core gang members on the streets, that probation's primary approach is crisis management.

In both contexts oversized caseloads, funding restrictions, and uncollaborative interagency relationships may exacerbate the problem. Additionally, probation's confusion over what its primary mission should be in regard to youth gang probationers - catching probation violators vs. facilitating successful treatment outcomes - may seriously hamper the development of a promising probation response.

## **Purpose and Content of this Manual**

*A model for a probation response is put forth.*

*A multi-strategy approach is necessary.*

*Essential program components and functions are covered.*

This manual will provide an overview of how a probation department can implement a promising youth gang suppression and intervention program. Its intended audience is the chief probation officer and management staff of a probation department. Its target group is youth and young adult gang probationers who are primarily involved in youth gang violence (see Introduction and Appendix B for glossary and a discussion of terms).

The probation model put forth in this manual is predicated on the assumption that a multi-strategy approach by probation is necessary to fulfill its dual mission of protecting the community and reforming the youth gang probationer. It recognizes that the costs of incarceration are prohibitive and that youth who are jailed will eventually return to their neighborhood of residence. Thus, it encourages probation to adopt a "balanced approach" by carrying out community mobilization activities to suppress youth gang probationer crime and providing counseling, educational, and employment opportunities to the gang probationer and his or her family. *As a model, it proposes a comprehensive approach which will have to be adjusted to the political realities and resource constraints of the given jurisdiction.*

This manual is divided into five sections which cover program design, service implementation, and other organizational activities necessary to conduct a program of this nature. These sections are listed below.

### **I. Assessing the Youth Gang Problem**

### **II. Setting Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

### **III. Organizational Development Objectives**

### **IV. Program Implementation**

- ▶ Developing Information Systems
- ▶ Conducting the Presentence Investigation
- ▶ Performing Probationer Intake and Supervision
- ▶ Facilitating Interagency Coordination and Community Mobilization
- ▶ Selecting and Training Staff

### **V. Program Evaluation**

## **Assessing the Youth Gang Problem**

*Assessment at several levels is required.*

The first step in probation's response to a perceived youth gang problem should be to assess its nature and scope at the probationer, agency and community levels. This will allow the agency to obtain information useful to planning and implementing a gang suppression and intervention program. At the probationer level, the assessment should determine the extent of gang involvement by probationers. At the agency level, the assessment should ascertain how organizational resources are currently being utilized in regard to this population. Finally, at the community level, the assessment should appraise the extent of the youth gang problem within the jurisdiction and how probation and other community organizations are working together to address it.

#### Planning the Assessment

Several initial tasks will have to be carried out before the assessment can be conducted. These consist of:

##### **A. Determining the feasibility of an assessment**

*Organizational and political support must be acquired.*

An initial step in assessment planning is to determine whether a problem assessment will be worthwhile. This will depend upon several factors including the level of support for the assessment within the probation department and other agencies, the political implications of acknowledging the possibility of a youth gang problem, and the amount of agency resources available to carry the assessment out.

*The chief probation officer and presiding judge are key people.*

In order to proceed with the assessment two conditions may have to be present:

- ✓ **first**, consensus by the chief and line probation officers that a potential youth gang problem exists; and
- ✓ **second**, approval by the presiding judge of the juvenile court for a problem analysis.

A publicized assault, an outcry by citizens or school officials for action from affected communities, or a probation report which documents youth gang activity can be utilized to garner support for an assessment of the problem.

*Denial of the youth gang problem may be present.*

Many agencies may be reluctant to admit that a youth gang problem exists and that something should be done to confront it. These agencies may be truly unaware of the problem or lack the expertise or resources necessary to properly identify and assess it. Despite these obstacles, a problem assessment should be conducted in most instances of suspected youth gang activity since the likelihood of effectively confronting a youth gang problem is much greater when it is addressed in its earlier stages.

## **B. Establishing an assessment framework**

*Definitions for the assessment should be established.*

*Before the assessment process can begin definitions and the assumptions underlying them will have to be made explicit. We suggest the following terms for this framework and list their definitions in the Introduction and Appendix B of this text:*

- ▶ criminal youth gang
- ▶ youth gang member
- ▶ hard core gang member
- ▶ regular gang member
- ▶ peripheral gang member
- ▶ gang-prone youth
- ▶ gang incident
- ▶ gang-motivated incident
- ▶ gang-related incident
- ▶ delinquent youth group
- ▶ other types of youth gangs
- ▶ criminal organization
- ▶ chronic gang problem context
- ▶ emerging gang problem context

These definitions should be utilized to classify youth group phenomena and gang problem contexts for the purpose of analysis and planning.

## **C. Preparing for data collection**

*Preliminary data collection tasks must be carried out.*

In most instances line probation officers will be the primary data collectors. Before proceeding with the data collection process the coordinator of the assessment should:

- ✓ conduct a special orientation session to explain the purpose and process of the assessment;
- ✓ develop simple data collection forms with instructions; and
- ✓ solicit suggestions from staff on how the planned data collection process can be improved.

### Probationer Level Assessment

*Data on youth gang probationers will have to be collected.*

The following data should be collected for probationers identified as youth gang members.

1. name
2. age
3. gender

4. race/ethnicity  
(e.g. African American, Puerto Rican, Vietnamese, etc.; crime patterns may be different by race, ethnicity, and generation of arrival)
5. youth gang affiliation
6. location of gang turf
7. monikers
8. identifiers  
(e.g. tatoos, scars, etc.)
9. criminal history  
(e.g. types of crime, location of crime, weapons used, modus operandi, group aspect of crime, fellow arrestees)
10. community of residence  
(including history of residential movement)
11. family circumstances  
(e.g. single parent, foster care, income level, occupational status, criminal history etc.)
12. school record  
(e.g. grades, conduct, attendance)
13. drug use and trafficking pattern, if any
14. physical and mental health status
15. employment history  
(e.g. jobs held, skills acquired)
16. level of probation supervision
17. services the youth has received on probation
18. description of the youth's performance on probation

*The character and prevalence of the youth gang problem on the caseload should be determined.*

Data on items 2 through 15, when analyzed, will be of special importance in specifying the scope and seriousness of the problem. Items 16 through 18 will indicate how resources within the probation department are currently being used with respect to youth gang probationers. Sample classification criteria for youth gang members can be found in Appendix C.

This data should also be collected for a sample of non-youth gang probationers for the sake of comparison, if possible. The data collection effort should focus on the current probation caseload and, if resources permit, cases processed by probation within the past

two years. While most of this information will probably be found in probationer case file records, collateral contacts with police, school, clergy, community-based youth agency personnel and others may be necessary to collect and verify data.

The assessment at this level should primarily attempt to discover:

- the total number of youth gang members and their proportion of probation's total caseload;
- the numbers and types of *gang-motivated crime* these youth have committed in order of their seriousness (i.e. homicides, assaults, drug trafficking, vandalism, graffiti);
- particular patterns of crime (e.g. only on weekends, only at a particular time of day); and
- whether youth gang probationers differ from non-gang youth probationers on any of the above characteristics.

Analysis of the data will permit the probation department to determine whether its probationers represent mainly:

**A. NO YOUTH GANG OR DELINQUENT GROUP PROBLEM, i.e.**

*The youth gang problem may be only one of several youth problems on the caseload.*

Youth group involvement in criminal activity such as a fight at a high school football game or a spontaneous act of group vandalism is minor and highly sporadic. Minor or serious delinquencies at the individual level are the norm;

**B. PRIMARILY A DELINQUENT YOUTH GROUP PROBLEM, i.e.**

Youth groups, mainly in the juvenile age range, associate to commit crime which *is not* characterized by turf boundaries, signs, symbols or concerns about group status or reputation. Conflict relations with other groups of youth *are not* typical. The delinquent activities of these groups may be of a random, serious or non-serious criminal nature generally concentrated in the property crime category;

**C. PRIMARILY A YOUTH HATE GROUP PROBLEM, i.e.**

Youth, sometimes under the direction of adults, engage in bias crimes, for example, verbal and physical attacks on people or the property of people of different sexual orientation, color, status, class, religious or political beliefs. Examples of this type of group include Neo-Nazi, skinhead, and satanic groups. A commitment to certain signs, symbols, and attire may also be present.

#### **D. PRIMARILY A YOUTH GANG PROBLEM, i.e.**

Probationers associate with other individuals on a regular basis to commit crimes *related to the interests of a gang* (e.g. intergang conflict, retaliation, protection of turf, status, and occasionally drug trafficking). A key indicator of youth gang formation may be the taking of a name by the group (e.g. Neighborhood Thugs, Watts Street Kids). Youth groups may have some commitment to turf, colors, signs, or symbols *with concerns about status or reputation*. The age of youth in these gangs may range broadly from 14 years or younger to 24 years or older.

#### **E. PRIMARILY YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN CRIMINAL GAIN GROUPS OR ORGANIZATIONS, i.e.**

Youth are involved in gang cliques or criminal organizations whose primary purpose is to profit from illicit activities. A key characteristic of these groups is *the division of proceeds related to criminal gain activities*. Examples of crime include extortion, robbery, burglary, automobile theft, and drug trafficking. These groups may be turf-based for the protection market areas, and use group names and symbols. In general, these groups have readily identifiable leadership and a more sophisticated, tightly knit structure than youth gangs. *Employer and employee roles may be clearly distinguishable*. Conflict relations with other criminal groups may occur to protect or expand market areas.

#### **F. A MIXED YOUTH GROUP PROBLEM WHICH VARIES ACCORDING TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE JURISDICTION, i.e.**

Youth groups with the characteristics of delinquent, hate, youth gang and criminal gain groups as described above are present within probation's jurisdiction.

The categories described above are clearly defined typologies. In reality, classification of youth group problems may be difficult given the lack of data and their variable nature. For example, the primary activities of a youth gang or one its cliques may be hard to determine. Both may evolve into a criminal gain group over time.

This manual specifies a probation approach for *youth gang* probationers. However, some of the strategies and procedures presented may be applicable to dealing with gang youth involved in delinquent or criminal activities which are unrelated to the interests of the gang. Probation approaches to criminal organizations will necessarily involve more surveillance, infiltration, and use of special legal tactics (e.g. use of Rico statutes) in conjunction with other criminal justice agencies.



### Agency Level Assessment

The probation department should assess whether it is fulfilling certain agency level objectives in reference to youth gang probationers. These objectives include:

*Are youth gang probationers continuing to commit crime?*

#### **A. PROTECTION OF THE COMMUNITY**

Probation should assess whether:

- youth gang probationers are violating their terms of probation and having their probation revoked at higher rates than non-gang probationers;
- probation is serving as a greater deterrent to further crime as compared to other kinds of justice system processing, e.g. non-court referral or sentencing to a training school.

The greater the prevalence of youth gang probationer crime, the more critically probation should examine the deterrent and rehabilitative functions of its program approach.

*Are youth gang probationers adhering to their court orders?*

#### **B. ENFORCEMENT OF COURT ORDERS**

Probation should ascertain whether it is effectively enforcing court orders for youth gang probationers. The following kinds of data should be analyzed:

- ✓ the type (i.e. technical vs. criminal) and rate of probation violations by youth gang probationers; and
- ✓ the nature and intensity of probation's efforts to ensure probationer compliance with court orders based on indicators such as:
  - ▶ home visits and collateral contacts made by probation officers;
  - ▶ descriptions of the level of supervision and other special techniques used (e.g. curfews, urine testing, electronic supervision, etc.).

Although difficult to assess, the existence of low intensity supervisory arrangements for youth gang probationers coupled with a high number of police arrests of this group may indicate a problem.

*Are youth gang probationers*

#### **C. REHABILITATION OF YOUTH GANG PROBATIONERS**

*receiving adequate rehabilitative services?*

Data on the number of referrals and the type of services delivered to youth gang probationers should be analyzed. High probation revocation and recidivism rates may indicate that youth gang probationers are receiving insufficient or inadequate rehabilitative services while on probation.

*The nature of the problem within the community and probation's interorganizational relationships need to be assessed.*

#### Community Level Assessment

The nature of the overall youth gang problem and probation's interagency and community contacts in reference to it will also have to be assessed. The outcome of this assessment will have implications for how probation structures its organizational response, particularly in regard to whether the gang problem within the jurisdiction is chronic or emerging. These contexts are often situated in ghetto or newcomer neighborhoods. As noted before, they can be described as follows:

*Probation may have both emerging and chronic gang problem areas in its jurisdiction.*

**Chronic gang problem context.** This is an area where the problem has persisted, often in serious form, for a number of years, sometimes decades. A large number of gangs and gang members are present. Gang membership among youth and within families may be intergenerational. Patterns of youth gang violence, gang-related drug trafficking, protection of turf, gang signs, symbols, recruitment and gang organization are well established.

**Emerging gang problem context.** This is an area where the problem has developed within the past several years. In the initial stages the distinction between ad hoc delinquent groups and youth gangs may be hard to make. Gang names, colors, signs, symbols, graffiti and turf may not be well developed. Incidents resembling street disorderliness may be present. The number of identified gangs and gang members, some who may have recently arrived from other cities, is relatively small. Distinctive crime patterns found within a chronic context are not persistent, but occasional incidents of gang-related violence and drug trafficking may occur. Denial of the problem may persist within communities and among particular organizations to protect a variety of interests.

Contacts will have to be made with criminal justice organizations, community agencies, grassroots groups, and community residents. Questions particularly relevant to each actor include:

*Police data*

#### **Police**

*Does the police department keep statistics on youth gang activity, particularly in regard to the number of gangs, gang members, and gang incidents? How do they define the terms gang, gang member, and gang incident? What are these statistics for the last two years and how have they fluctuated?*

*What is the police department's approach to gangs and gang youth? Do they have a gang unit? Do officers receive specialized gang training?*

*Do police and probation provide each other with gang-related information and intelligence? Have they set up regular intelligence networking and other types of cooperative arrangements?*

*Do the police refer gang youth to other agencies for educational, employment and other types of assistance?*

### **Prosecutor**

#### *Prosecutor data*

*Do cases involving youth gang members receive any special treatment? Are there special policies (e.g. priority attention, maximum penalties) or procedures (e.g. vertical prosecution) that have been developed?*

*Does the prosecutor have any data on gang members in regard to:*

- ▶ *number of cases involving gang incidents?*
- ▶ *number of gang members prosecuted?*
- ▶ *results of these prosecutions (e.g. dismissals, plea bargains, reductions)?*

*Do probation and the prosecutors share information on gang-related matters, particularly in regard to criminal activity committed by gang probationers?*

*Do probation officers assist prosecutors in case preparation and filings on gang cases?*

*Does the prosecutor and probation normally identify hardcore, adjudicated gang youth for special probation monitoring and services?*

*Are youth gang probationers who violate their probation immediately detained and prosecuted?*

### **Public Defender**

#### *Public defender data*

*Do the public defender and probation cooperate in formulating caseplan recommendations for gang youth brought before the court?*

### **The Court**

*Court data*

*Does the judge or the court as a whole handle cases of gang youth differently than non-gang youth (e.g. special probation conditions)? If so, in what way?*

*Does probation systematically provide judges with information on gang specific topics such as special sentencing and restitution options and specific gang orders and sanctions for gang-affiliated youth?*

*Does the court regularly mandate remedial and basic education, vocational training, job placement, and community restitution for gang-affiliated youth?*

**Local and State Correctional Facilities**

*Correctional system data*

*Are probation and local/state correctional facilities sharing gang-related information, particularly in regard to identifying gang members in detention and those being released from custody?*

**Parole**

*Parole data*

*Are probation and parole sharing gang-related information, particularly in regard to the interaction between problematic gang members on their respective caseloads?*

**Schools**

*School data*

*Has there been any evidence of youth gang activity on school grounds (e.g. graffiti on school grounds or in school books, wearing of gang dress or colors, flashing of signs, recruitment, harassment, fights between opposing groups of youth)?*

*Does the school keep records on gang-related activity?*

*Do they have any gang prevention or treatment programs?*

*Do they have special security arrangements? For example, do they have a disciplinary code which prohibits and specifies sanctions for gang dress and graffiti, use of gang gestures, and weapons possession? Do they have special procedures for handling gang incidents at school, specifically with regard to contacting criminal justice agencies and handling public relations?*

*Are probation and schools sharing information on gang probationers?*

*Does probation provide crisis intervention services with gang probationers in the school setting? Does probation offer training to*

*school staff on gang awareness techniques and strategies to control the behavior of gang youth in the classroom?*

*Is there a special school policy in regard to admission and expulsion of gang members? What alternatives are provided?*

*Does the school system provide gang youth with supportive counseling, special/remedial education, apprenticeship training, and job placement?*

### **Community Based Youth Agencies (CBYAs)**

#### *Community-based agency data*

*Do CBYAs target gang youth for services?*

*Does probation refer gang probationers to CBYAs for appropriate services?*

*Are probation and CBYAs sharing information on gang probationers?*

*Does probation monitor gang probationers in CBYA settings? Do probation officers provide crisis intervention services to CBYAs with these probationers when the need arises?*

*Does probation provide gang-related training to CBYA staff?*

### **Grassroots Organizations (GOs), Churches and Residents**

#### *Community level data*

*Are probation and GOs sharing certain kinds of information on gang probationers, particularly in regard to rumor control and probationer involvement in gang incidents? If so, with whom?*

*Are GOs and churches providing gang probationers with community service options and volunteer mentors?*

*Are GOs, churches, and local community residents collaborating in activities designed to control the gang problem (e.g. citizen patrols, mediation activities)?*

### **Local Industry and Business**

#### *Local business data*

*Are local industry and businesses providing gang probationers with training and job opportunities?*

*Is probation monitoring youth gang probationers on the job?*

### **Youth Informants (including probationers)**

## *Youth data*

Questions for selected youth should include:

*Do you have gangs in your community? How do you know this? What are the activities of the gangs?*

*Can you identify who is a gang member? How so?*

*Has anyone from a gang harassed or attempted to recruit you into a gang?*

*Are you involved in a gang? If so, describe your activities? Why do you belong to a gang?*

## *Putting the data to use*

Probation should use this information to determine the extent and seriousness of the gang problem, the availability of resources, and the kind of interorganizational initiatives needed.

The location of particular gang turfs by name of gang should be designated on a probation catchment area map. The activities that each organization surveyed is currently implementing in response to the youth gang problem should also be summarized.

## **Summary**

Guidelines for assessing a youth gang problem from the vantage point of probation are provided in this section. Problem assessment is the first step to developing an effective response to the youth gang problem. In planning an assessment, several issues must be addressed. These include determining the feasibility of an assessment, establishing a viable assessment framework, and preparing for data collection.

A comprehensive probation assessment of the youth gang problem will collect and analyze data at three levels. At the first level, data is collected on probationers to determine their involvement in youth gang crime and the nature of the youth gang problem(s) on the caseload. At the second level, information is obtained to assess whether probation is successful in regard to protecting the community, enforcing court orders, and achieving rehabilitative goals with respect to youth gang probationers. At the third level, a community-wide survey is undertaken to ascertain the nature and the scope of the youth gang problem within the jurisdiction, and how probation and other organizations are working together to address it. The results of this assessment then serve as a basis for planning or adjusting probation's response to a youth gang problem, if present.

## CHAPTER 3

### SETTING GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND OBJECTIVES

- Agency Goals
- Program Strategies
- Organizational Development Objectives
- Summary

#### Agency Goals

*Four primary goals and related objectives are identified.*

The goals which should guide probation in both chronic and emerging gang problem contexts consist of:

- ✓ *furnishing the court with detailed information and recommendations in youth gang member cases, especially regarding possible sanctions and rehabilitative options;*
- ✓ *enforcing the orders of the court and the laws of the state;*
- ✓ *providing assistance to criminal justice organizations, community agencies, and grassroots groups in their efforts to control and prevent youth gang crime; and*
- ✓ *brokering or developing special school and employment opportunities for youth gang probationers to meet their social development needs.*

#### Program Strategies

Probation should implement the following strategies to achieve these goals:

#### **Suppression**

*Intensive supervision or removal of gang youth from the community may be necessary.*

A suppression strategy by probation endeavors to deter and control acts of crime by youth gang probationers. The primary purpose of this strategy is to protect the community by imposing controls on youth gang probationers as needed. This strategy primarily employs intensive supervision and probation revocation, if necessary, as well as techniques of intelligence, surveillance, detention, arrest, prosecution and incarceration.

#### **Social Intervention**

*Gang youth and their families need social supports.*

*A community approach to the youth gang problem must be promoted.*

*Opportunities to achieve at school and through employment should be provided.*

*Special mechanisms must be developed to implement a multi-strategy approach.*

A social intervention strategy attempts to bring about positive behavioral change and social development within the youth gang probationer. The primary purpose of this strategy is to provide youth gang probationers and their families with supportive and developmental assistance leading to a satisfactory termination of probation and the development of a crime free lifestyle. Examples of social intervention activities include counseling, crisis intervention, street outreach work, advocacy for individual youth, resource referral, and provision of recreational services.

### **Community Mobilization**

A community mobilization strategy involves probation efforts directed at enhancing community and interorganizational relationships to address the youth gang problem at the individual and program levels. The principal purpose of this strategy is to change the social environment in which the gang youth develops. Examples can include organizing parents and community groups for gang crime prevention or developing advocacy efforts with other agencies to provide opportunities for gang youth.

### **Opportunities Provision**

An opportunities provision strategy consists of making available or providing referrals to basic competency building opportunities. The chief purpose of this strategy is to provide youth gang probationers with conventional alternatives to the gang lifestyle. Examples of such opportunities include remedial education, tutoring, job readiness, vocational training, and age-appropriate employment.

### **Organizational Development**

An organizational development strategy entails changes within the probation department to facilitate the implementation of the above strategies. The chief aim of this strategy is to develop organizational structures and mechanisms to deal with the gang problem. Examples can include vertical case management, specialized gang units, and placement of probation offices in gang-affected areas.

The prioritization and use of these strategies will depend on the nature and severity of the gang problem, the objectives of probation, and the amount of resources available in the probation department and community for gang-related programming.

### **Organizational Development Objectives**

After probation has completed the assessment certain organizational changes will probably be necessary. These changes may entail:



**A. Providing more effective supervision to youth gang probationers.**

Since gang members known to the criminal justice system are often chronic and serious offenders, probation should identify youth gang members on their case load, target them for increased supervision, and provide them with special assistance to promote proper social adjustment. Changes may be needed in organizational arrangements, staffing patterns and program procedures, especially within criminal justice agencies. These arrangements will probably vary according to the problem context.

*Modest organizational adjustments may be sufficient in emerging contexts.*

*In emerging gang problem contexts*, a number of options can be considered. The chief probation officer can:

- ✓ provide appropriate kinds of gang information and training to all probation, especially juvenile officers, and target younger juveniles at highest risk for repeat offenses; and/or
- ✓ designate a probation officer(s) with specialized gang expertise to handle all of the gang-affiliated probationers within the unit; or
- ✓ create a specialized detail of probation officers with reduced paperwork requirements, exclusive youth gang probationer caseloads, and community outreach functions.

In some instances, more complete training and specialized arrangements similar to those in chronic contexts may be required

*Special organizational arrangements will have to be implemented in chronic gang problem contexts.*

*In chronic gang problem contexts*, full scale specialized gang probation units located in gang-affected areas will probably be required. A specialized gang unit may be in order if some of the following conditions are present:

- ✓ the probation department has a large enough staff to have specialized functions;
- ✓ youth gang probationers are highly interactive and mobile across neighborhoods and jurisdictions;
- ✓ youth gang probationers are committing a large proportion of the violence on probation's caseload;
- ✓ probation officer duties require special qualifications to effectively supervise youth gang probationers;
- ✓ the probation department decides to carry out community mobilization activities with respect to the youth gang issue.

If the department decides to create a special gang unit, the chief probation officer must be sensitive to several issues. For instance, the role and rationale for the gang unit should be clearly explained to the probation staff at large, to guard against elitism and ensure that this unit works cooperatively with other units of the department. In the final analysis all probation officers in the department must have responsibility for dealing with the gang problem.

The advantages of a special gang unit should be carefully explained. For example, it may allow regular probation officers to spend more time doing casework supervision with non-gang probationers and networking with service providers in the field. It may also alleviate their fears about officer safety since gang probationers tend to be violence-prone and usually reside in high crime neighborhoods.

Guidelines for interunit activities should also be developed and adherence to them regularly monitored by frontline supervisors. The role of a probation gang unit officer should be clearly specified, particularly in regard to the police, so that probation officers do not improperly engage in police functions.

To provide for effective supervision of youth gang probationers the design of this unit may need to incorporate several program components. They include:

\* **vertical case management**

This is a case processing approach in which each case is assigned exclusively to one officer who assumes responsibility for the case from intake to termination.

\* **probation officer assignment to particular communities**

Probation officers should be assigned to specific areas of high gang crime activity which have a high density of youth gang probationers to assume intensive supervisory responsibilities.

\* **intensive supervision**

Frequent contacts with hard-core youth gang probationers (at least 1-3 times per day) and collaterals should be mandated at home, school, and employer sites. Given resource constraints, this option should be utilized for only a small percentage of cases, possibly in conjunction with electronic supervision. Caseloads should be limited to a level that allows the probation officer to perform both intensive surveillance and rehabilitative functions. The nature of assigned tasks and travel times should be key considerations

in establishing an appropriate caseload.

\* **gang-specific terms of probation**

Application of gang-specific terms or conditions of probation should be recommended to the court in all cases involving youth gang members. Certain appropriate conditions should be applied to the youth gang probationer. For a listing of gang-specific probation terms refer to Appendix D.

\* **special probation officer authority**

In certain instances the probation officer should be provided with search and seizure power and have authority to place youth gang probationers in temporary detention subject to the approval of the court. Search and seizure power allows the probation officer access to the probationer's person, household, and other specified areas without a search warrant. Guidelines to protect the constitutional rights of gang youth and govern the use of these powers are essential.

\* **other court-mandated, supervisory arrangements**

Other arrangements designed to deter particular youth gang probationers from crime and ensure their compliance with court orders can include curfew, electronic supervision, house arrest, regular alcohol and drug testing.

\* **special linkages with police**

Mutual relationships should be established with the police to share gang intelligence and probation conditions of gang youth. Probation and police should also provide reciprocal back up to each other in carrying out certain tasks (e.g. curfew sweeps). Police/probation ride-alongs in gang-affected communities may enhance surveillance and enforcement functions.

\* **special linkages with prosecution**

The probation officer should share gang-related information with the prosecutor for case preparation, filing and trial. Prosecutors in turn should establish a rapid response to probationer violations of court orders which result in immediate processing. A referral system should be established between prosecution and probation for victim and witness protection.

\* **officer safety guidelines and training**

Officer safety guidelines and training programs should be developed because of the dangerous situations which probation officers may find themselves in chronic gang problem contexts. Sample officer safety guidelines and training curricula are located in Appendix E.

It should be noted that some of these components may be unfeasible due to the political realities and organizational constraints within the jurisdiction.

*A strong community presence by probation is required.*

*In both emerging and chronic problem contexts, probation should pay special attention to establishing a strong community presence. This is one of the most important components of a promising approach to controlling and reducing youth gang activity. This can be achieved through various organizational, staffing and liaison arrangements. For example, probation can:*

- ✓ set up local probation offices in gang affected areas which allow probation officers to more readily perform surveillance, supervision, home visit, and crisis intervention activities;
- ✓ institute flex time options and variable work shifts for staff, particularly during times of high gang activity; and
- ✓ provide probation liaisons to schools, community-based youth agencies, grassroots organizations, and parent groups.

**B. Increasing social support to youth gang probationers, their families and referral agencies.**

*Personal and family support consisting of basic skills training and crisis intervention is essential.*

Probation must provide the social support necessary for a youth gang probationer to move away from involvement in criminal gang activity. To accomplish this, probation can:

- ✓ establish counseling support for youth gang probationers focused on school performance, job procurement, gang situation avoidance and other personal problems;
- ✓ provide parents of gang members with access to gang awareness and parental effectiveness training; and
- ✓ develop a capacity to intervene in probationer and gang crisis situations, particularly in chronic gang contexts.

Special counseling and mediation skills will also be required of probation officers to carry out their crisis intervention responsibilities effectively. Emphasis should be placed on building strong links with families, former gang members, school officials,

and community-based youth agency personnel to develop an integrated case plan.

**C. Providing better social opportunities to youth gang probationers.**

*Positive school, employment, and community roles for gang youth must be provided.*

Gang youth often have social, educational, and employment deficits which cause them to meet their personal belonging and esteem needs through the gang. To provide these youth with meaningful alternatives to the gang lifestyle, probation should ideally:

- ✓ implement case plans that emphasize community service, remedial and basic education, vocational training, and age appropriate employment;
- ✓ engage in advocacy and community development activities in conjunction with other agencies and local organizations when these opportunities are not available.

**Note:** The approach to the youth gang problem in most chronic problem cities will probably not be successful in the long term without this component.

**D. Developing interagency partnerships and coalitions to improve the agency and community response to the problem**

No one agency can address the youth gang problem successfully. Agencies must cooperate and combine resources to effect a comprehensive integrated response to generate the resources and the continuum of supervision necessary to have a positive impact.

*Probation must promote a collaborative community approach to the youth gang problem.*

*Probation should take a lead role in this community mobilization process, particularly since it has special links with both the criminal justice and community social service system. Probation's community mobilization efforts should focus on the following objectives:*

- ✓ Encourage the community to acknowledge the problem when denial is present;
- ✓ Help develop a definitional consensus on key gang terms (e.g. gang, gang member, gang incident);

*Probation leadership in the community mobilization process is vital.*

- ✓ Establish mutually beneficial interagency partnerships and coalitions related to:
  - improving the supervision and social support of gang youth in high gang crime areas;
  - providing pertinent educational and social development opportunities to gang youth including probationers; and
  - procuring job training and employment opportunities for gang youth including probationers.
- ✓ Educate the public about the youth gang problem.

### **Summary**

In this section, a strategy design is presented for a probation response to youth gang crime, particularly in regard to setting appropriate agency goals, program strategies, and organizational development objectives. With respect to youth gang adjudicants and probationers, pertinent agency goals should consist of: 1) furnishing the court with appropriate information and recommendations; 2) effectively enforcing court orders and applicable laws; 3) providing adequate assistance to criminal justice organizations, community agencies and grassroots groups in their gang control efforts; and 4) brokering special school and employment opportunities for purposes of rehabilitation.

A promising probation response to youth gang activity will incorporate a multiple strategy approach. Strategies of suppression, social intervention, community mobilization, opportunities provision, and organizational development should be implemented by probation to craft a "balanced response" to an identified youth gang problem. More specifically, a response which balances social control and supervision activities for youth gang probationers with the provision of viable social opportunities. To achieve this, certain organizational development objectives and activities to carry them out will have to be developed and implemented. Invariably, these objectives will be concerned with providing more effective supervision to youth gang probationers; increasing social support to youth gang probationers, their families and referral agencies; providing better social opportunities to youth gang probationers; and developing interagency partnerships and coalitions to improve the agency and community response to the problem.

## CHAPTER 4

### DEVELOPING INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- The Gang Intelligence System
- Probation Officer Resource File
- Summary

*Information systems can assist the probation officer to suppress and intervene in youth gang activity.*

Good information systems can enhance probation's capacity to confront a youth gang problem in terms of suppression and intervention. At the departmental level, a properly organized gang intelligence system can provide the probation officer with information to identify, analyze, prevent and control gang-related criminal acts. At the community level, it can provide probation with a means to substantiate a gang problem, and possibly obtain funding to address it. A well developed resource file can also prove invaluable to the probation officer by listing resources available in the community to address the social adjustment needs of gang youth. Proper development and use of both of these systems will be necessary for probation to successfully address the problem.

#### The Gang Intelligence System

*Intelligence should be timely, current, and useful.*

A probation gang intelligence system should perform three primary functions:

- ✓ **first**, provide timely intelligence on the criminal activity of individual gang probationers;
- ✓ **second**, furnish up-to-date information on the probation conditions of gang youth; and
- ✓ **third**, maintain current information on gang activity which may affect individual gang probationer behavior.

The design of the intelligence system should depend on whether the jurisdiction is experiencing an emerging or chronic gang problem.

*In an emerging context the gang intelligence system should be less structured.*

**Emerging gang problem jurisdiction.** In this context the need for data may be somewhat less and the availability of reliable information more limited. The characteristics of gang culture and criminal activity may still be in an evolving state and hard to identify. Other agencies in the community may not be knowledgeable about gang activity and have no information systems set up to collect gang-related data.

As a result, the gang intelligence system in emerging contexts should be relatively informal:

- Probation officers should note gang-related characteristics of

probationers in their file and share the information at staff meetings.

- Intelligence sources should be cultivated. Sources of gang-related information will probably be limited to the youth gang probationer, the police, and the prosecutor.
- *Special care should be taken not to incorrectly identify probationers as youth gang members.* Criteria useful for identifying youth gang members can be found in Appendix C.
- A list of identified gang probationers should be developed and circulated internally so that probation officers are aware of their potential for committing youth gang crime.

*In a chronic context the gang intelligence system should be computerized and integrated across key justice agencies.*

**Chronic gang problem jurisdiction.** In this context there may be a greater need for a more formal intelligence system. A computerized, multiple terminal system may be required which is integrated with the data information systems of local police agencies and the District or State's Attorney's Office to enhance retrieval, exchange, and analysis of large amounts of gang-related information.

Intelligence information should be collected with reference to the characteristics of both the youth gang probationer and the gang situation.

*Information on probationer's gang-related characteristics and history should be kept on the system.*

1. Data on individual youth gang probationers should include:
  - ▶ individual background information (e.g. name, DOB, address, SSN#, home phone #)
  - ▶ prior *sustained* charges including history of gang criminality and gang criminal modus operandi
  - ▶ conditions of probation
  - ▶ monikers commonly used
  - ▶ tatoos/identifying features/scars
  - ▶ gang affiliation
  - ▶ rival gangs
  - ▶ level of individual gang involvement (e.g. peripheral, regular, hardcore)
  - ▶ level of individual violence potential (e.g. low, medium, high)



- ▶ identification of adjudicated gang members with whom the probationer is mandated not to associate
- ▶ automobile driven by the gang youth (e.g. make, model, year, license)
- ▶ types of weapons used in priors (e.g. 45 caliber, 9mm)
- ▶ mug shot
- ▶ fingerprints

This information should be placed in the individual file of the youth gang probationer and also input into the gang intelligence system. These records will need to be constantly updated since probation conditions and the nature of intelligence will change. A security system should be established where the information is checked for validity and input by probation personnel who have special security clearances to gain access to the system. Examples of gang intelligence information sheets can be found in Appendix F.

*Current information on the local gang situation should be kept in a central office file.*

2. Data to be collected and regularly updated on the local gang situation and kept in a general office file should consist of:

- names of gangs, gang rosters with individual member monikers, gang signs and symbols, location(s) of gang turf, and gang criminal modus operandi;
- history of each gang within the jurisdiction including alliances and rivalries with other gangs; and
- current gang activity and trends including involvement in drug trafficking, kind of weaponry used, and patterns of member recruitment.

*Intelligence information can be obtained from a variety of sources.*

Within the department, individual probation officers, agency records, and field reports may serve as avenues to collect the above information. Data sources outside the department can include police, prosecutors, court personnel, detention and custody staff, parole, corrections, clergy, community-based youth personnel, grassroots organizations, citizens, and gang members themselves.

*Intelligence reports should be generated as needed.*

Reports based on this information should be generated as needed (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly) for intelligence purposes and circulated to administrative and line staff. Information covered by these reports should include:

- youth gang probationer characteristics by age, gender, race/ethnicity for each local or district probation office;
- general statistical information concerning the gang probationer caseload to give an overview of processing trends. This should include:
- summary intelligence reports on youth gang activity from each probation office.
  - ▶ number of dismissals
  - ▶ number of terminations
  - ▶ number of revocations
  - ▶ services delivered

A sample probation intelligence report containing some of these items can be found in Appendix G.

#### Uses of Intelligence

Regular and crisis routines should be established for intelligence analysis and use. In normal situations probation officers should be monitoring their caseload, agency intelligence reports and information from other sources to discern gang activity and trends which could potentially lead their probationers to violence (e.g. recruitment of youth by recently released gang parolees). In gang crisis situations intelligence can be shared with police to target gang probationers for surveillance and in person contacts to warn against retaliation.

Administrative and frontline staff should have access to intelligence information for review. Procedures should be established *within legal limits* for sharing this information with other criminal justice personnel including police, prosecutors, state and federal law enforcement officials. Information from these files can be shared with youth gang probationers under set guidelines. However, youth gang probationers should not be allowed to review their files unless stipulated by court order.

*The performance of the intelligence system should be regularly assessed.*

*A resource file provides a listing of local resources and services.*

*The probation officer should assess the needs of probationers and resources in the community available to meet them.*

*A broad array of services and opportunities will be necessary for gang youth.*

Finally, the intelligence gathering process should be regularly assessed to ensure that information is accurate, current, and pertinent to the needs of the probation department. The quality of data retrieval, exchange, and analysis should also be evaluated on a regular basis. Outdated information should be purged according to a set timetable.

#### Probation Officer Resource File

The purpose of the resource file is to provide the probation officer with a description of the resources and services available in the community for the reformation of youth gang probationers.

To create a viable resource file each probation officer should assess the needs of youth gang members on his or her caseload and resources available in or near their community of residence. Community resources can be identified by referring to area social service directories (e.g. United Way Blue Book) or conducting a general community survey. Other possible sources of information include:

- ▶ the phone book
- ▶ local foundations (to see who they fund)
- ▶ schools
- ▶ police associations
- ▶ statutorily mandated agencies

The probation officer should also visit as many of these agencies as possible in search of activities and services. It often helps to observe these programs in action whether at police stations, schools, courts, community agencies, and other organizations. This not only gives the probation officer a sense of the service the agency provides, but also the youths who would benefit from them. Once an appropriate service is discovered the probation officer should negotiate a referral arrangement with the agency and offer follow up support. In larger jurisdictions, probation may need to hire a community resource officer to identify, screen and develop community resources.

A typical resource information sheet should list the name and address and phone number of the agency, the contact person, services offered to gang youth, and a description of referral procedures. A good array of service referral possibilities particularly applicable to gang youth will include:

- ▶ medical services (e.g. learning disabilities, tattoo removal)
- ▶ counseling, mental health, and substance abuse programs
- ▶ community service opportunities

- ▶ remedial and basic education
- ▶ alternative or special school programs
- ▶ job readiness, vocational training and employment programs
- ▶ parental training and support programs
- ▶ supervised recreational opportunities

Information on referral agencies utilized by probation officers should be listed in a general agency resource directory which can be distributed to staff. A notebook format is suggested, so that it can be easily updated.

*Use of a resource file should be a job requirement.*

It is important to make updating and use of a resource file a basic requirement of the probation officer's job. Otherwise, certain probation officers may only concentrate on suppression activities for gang-affiliated youth on their caseload. Finally, the quality of the services to which gang probationers are referred should be regularly examined through feedback from youth gang probationers and other sources.

### **Summary**

A framework and procedures for a gang intelligence system and a probation officer resource file are delineated in this section. Both of these information systems may be necessary to effectively monitor the activities and provide for the social adjustment needs of the youth gang probationer. An effective gang intelligence system provides the probation officer with current, accurate information on the youth gang probationer's activity in the community and his or her probation conditions. The design and sophistication of the system should depend on whether the jurisdiction has an emerging or chronic gang problem. Data concerning the youth's background, involvement in the gang, and violence potential should be collected. Reports on youth gang probationers, youth gangs and gang activity in the jurisdiction should be generated as needed. Appropriate system safeguards to protect the rights of the probationer and the validity of the information will need to be established.

The resource file provides a listing of resources and services available in the community which the probation officer can utilize to effect intervention with the youth gang probationer. A good resource file will list a broad range of pertinent resources and service options for youth gang probationers related to physical and mental health, community service, education, employment, parental training, and recreation.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONDUCTING THE PRE-SENTENCE INVESTIGATION (PSI)

- Content of the PSI
- PSI Recommendations
- Summary

*A presentence investigation report provides a basis for an informed sentencing decision and case plan.*

The primary purpose of the presentence investigation report (PSI) is to provide the judge with pertinent and complete information about the adjudicated youth gang offender so that an informed sentencing decision can be made. The PSI can serve several other purposes:

- ✓ the probation officer can significantly influence the judge's sentencing decision by means of a comprehensive and well written PSI;
- ✓ the PSI can provide a basis for a plan of supervision; and
- ✓ the PSI can educate judges who are not well informed about specific gang issues and dispositional options.

#### Content of the PSI

*The PSI should contain gang-specific information.*

The probation officer should include both general and gang specific information in the PSI about the adjudicant. These include:

- ▶ physical, psychological, and health information including drug and alcohol use;
- ▶ a careful appraisal of the youth's academic, vocational, recreational and work history;
- ▶ an assessment of the youth's social maturity and competence;
- ▶ an overview of family circumstances, especially the family's ability to supervise and assist the youth to improve his or her behavior;
- ▶ a history of the youth's delinquent and criminal activity, particularly gang-related, including a review of the seriousness of the incident(s) for which he or she is presently in court;
- ▶ the youth's position in and level of commitment to the gang; and
- ▶ the current state of criminal activity of the youth's gang.

*Several questions will have to be answered to make an informed dispositional recommendation.*

### PSI Recommendations

Before the probation officer can make an informed dispositional recommendation to the judge concerning a gang youth, he or she will have to answer several key questions:

*What is the effect of the gang offender's act on the victim?*

*Is the offense the youth committed serious enough to warrant confinement in a secure setting?*

*What are the risks posed to the safety of the youth and the community, if he or she returns to the gang and the neighborhood? More specifically, what is the current and future likelihood that the youth will become engaged in criminal, especially, violent activity?*

*Will incarceration harden the youth's commitment to the gang?*

*Where does the gang youth have the best chance of receiving the supervision and services necessary for him to adopt a law-abiding lifestyle?*

*What community-based alternatives are available?*

Some youth may benefit from detention while others may be sincere about leaving the gang, if permitted to remain in the community. To make an informed decision, the probation officer will have to be familiar with the conditions of incarceration and the quality of supervision and services that can be provided to the youth in the community.

*Certain recommendations for gang youth should be made as a part of standard operating procedure.*

In instances where the probation officer advises the court to allow a gang-affiliated youth who has committed a serious offense to remain in the community, certain recommendations should ordinarily be made as a part of standard operating procedure. These include:

#### **1. Mandating special conditions of probation such as:**

- ▶ non-association with specific gang members;
- ▶ prohibition of gang dress and other insignia;
- ▶ non-possession of drugs or weapons;
- ▶ strict curfew;
- ▶ alcohol and drug testing; and
- ▶ probation officer search and seizure authority, if necessary.

The special gang terms should serve as a deterrent to future gang activity. Other conditions such as drug testing or search and seizure *should be warranted by the special circumstances of the case.* Alcohol and drug testing should be applied in cases where the youth is a serious offender or has a history of drug involvement or drug-related crime. Search and seizure should be mandated when the

offender has a history of drug involvement and possession of weapons and contraband. The prosecutor should present and read these special "gang terms" into the court record and the youth should sign the sheet listing the probation conditions.

2. **Requiring participation by the youth in specific educational, employment, and community service programs such as:**

- ▶ diagnostic, counseling and treatment services;
- ▶ social skills and support;
- ▶ remedial and basic education, including literacy training;
- ▶ placement in an alternative school;
- ▶ vocational training;
- ▶ job readiness and placement programs;
- ▶ full and part time employment;
- ▶ graffiti removal and community clean up.

The need for and the intensity of these services will vary according to each gang probationer. A careful assessment should be made to determine their applicability.

3. **Recommending gang awareness and parent effectiveness training for the youth's parents.**

This should be recommended in cases where there is clear evidence that the parent is in need of information about gangs and how to deal with their child's behavior. For example, when parents express they are totally unaware of the child's involvement in youth gang activity and want to learn more about its nature; or when the youth is totally out of control and the parent(s) does not know what to do. This training should be sensitive to the culture and ethnicity of the family and the neighborhood, if possible. Special care should be taken not to set the youth up for failure by imposing conditions with which he or she cannot possibly comply.

Supervisors of probation officers should systematically check PSI reports on youth gang adjudicants to make sure that the required gang-related information is being addressed and communicated appropriately to the court.

A sample PSI report can be found in Appendix H.

### **Summary**

Guidelines pertaining to the content of the PSI and suggested dispositional recommendations for youth gang adjudicants are stipulated in this section. The PSI is important for many reasons including its ability to influence judicial decisions, its utility for developing a supervision plan, and its capacity to educate judges on

gang-related topics. Beyond the regular information contained in the PSI, the probation officer should report on information related to the youth's gang activity, the youth's position and level of involvement in the gang, and the gang's current state of criminal activity. Questions concerning the impact that probation, incarceration and other dispositional alternatives will have on the youth's commitment to the gang lifestyle should also be addressed. Certain recommendations by the probation officer should be made as a part of standard operating procedure when dealing with youth gang adjudicants. These include: 1) mandating special conditions of probation including non-association with specific gang members and prohibition of gang dress and other insignia; 2) requiring participation of the youth in specific educational, employment, and community service programs; and 3) recommending gang awareness and parental effectiveness training for the youth's parents when appropriate.

## CHAPTER 6

### PERFORMING INTAKE AND PROBATIONER SUPERVISION

- Performing Intake
- Assessing Risks and Needs
- Initiating the Supervisory Relationship
- Developing and Implementing a Case Plan
- Enforcing Conditions of Probation
- Handling Probation Violations
- Emerging and Chronic Contexts
- Summary

#### *Goals of a supervisory relationship*

An effective supervisory relationship is the basis for any promising probation approach to the youth gang problem. The goals of this relationship are two-fold:

- 1) to control the risks the youth poses to himself or herself and the community; and
- 2) to develop a case plan to meet the social and personal needs of the youth.

This section will cover the primary functions and organizational arrangements necessary to supervise the youth gang probationer.

#### Performing Intake



*Intake officers should be trained to identify youth gang characteristics.*

Intake may be the most critical component of a probation gang program because it is where gang youth are actually identified and targeted for appropriate court processing and case planning. Intake officers should be able to:

- ✓ identify youth gang members and gang-motivated crime;
- ✓ make recommendations to the prosecuting attorney on whether the case should be filed; and
- ✓ make decisions, according to set guidelines, on which gang youth should be detained, released to the custody of their parents, or diverted.

Intake officers should be specially trained to identify indicators of youth gang affiliation and crime, and have close working relationships with police, the prosecutor and juvenile detention staff for purposes of information sharing and decision-making on gang-related matters.

Gang youth should be placed in detention pending their hearing when:

- ✓ their safety is in jeopardy (e.g. threat of retaliation);
- ✓ they are a threat to the community; or
- ✓ there is a risk that the youth may flee the jurisdiction.

Overcrowding in the detention facility may impact greatly on probation's ability to meet these objectives. In these instances, probation may have to develop detailed intake criteria to deal with this constraint. (See Appendix I.) When home detention is used prior to a hearing it is important that the intake or the probation officer clearly explain the conditions of this status to the youth and his or her parents.

*Guidelines should be developed for the processing of gang youth during intake.*

Finally, if the intake officer should decide to divert a particular gang youth from the justice system it should be to a specific agency or community-based program. Criteria and guidelines for diversion should be carefully developed and implemented. A mechanism to ensure that the youth reports to the referral agency may be appropriate. Additionally, probation may want to consider the use of memoranda of understanding with agencies concerning the exchange of certain types of information about the youth. The parents and youth will have to sign permission forms to allow this to take place. (See Appendix J.)

#### Assessing Risks and Needs

*The risk/needs assessment should address a number of topics.*

After intake, each youth gang probationer should be assessed by the probation officer assigned to the case to determine the level of

supervision and the nature and intensity of services that should be provided. The risk/needs assessment should cover the following dimensions:

- ▶ prior record
- ▶ history of institutional commitment or out of home placement
- ▶ drug/chemical abuse
- ▶ alcohol abuse
- ▶ parental control/influence
- ▶ school discipline/employment problems
- ▶ learning/academic performance problems
- ▶ runaway/escape behavior
- ▶ negative peer influence/gang association

Information to assess these dimensions can be obtained from many sources including intake files, court and police reports, interviews, and record checks.

*Supervisory options should range from least to most restrictive.*

Levels of supervision for youth gang probationers should range from least to most restrictive (e.g. low, medium, high) and be periodically adjusted according to the probationer's success in adhering to his or her probation conditions. The following principles should be applied:

- the level of supervision set for the youth gang probationer should be proportional to the risk the youth poses to himself or herself and the community;
- youth gang probationers who remain arrest free for a substantial period of time should be considered for the next lowest level of supervision; and
- the type and intensity of social services should vary according to the needs of the individual youth.

A follow up risk/needs assessment should be conducted 6 months after initial intake.

#### Initiating the Supervisory Relationship

A number of activities will have to be performed by the probation officer in the course of supervision:

*Conditions of probation should be clearly explained.*

The initial meeting should take place at the probation department and be formal in nature. The probation officer should clearly explain the conditions of probation and the consequences of their violation to the youth, his or her parents or other family members in a manner they will understand (e.g. their native language). Each condition of probation should be read aloud by the youth or probation officer and explained in detail. Opportunities to raise questions regarding the conditions should be provided to the youth

and his or her parents to make sure that they clearly understand their meaning. It may be helpful to ask the youth to explain the terms of his or her probation in his or her own words. Each party should get a copy of the court order and sign it to acknowledge receipt.

*Information related to the gang situation and needs of the youth should be obtained.*

If circumstances permit, the probation officer should attempt to talk separately with the youth and members of his or her family such as a parent, spouse or relative. The youth should be asked why he or she thinks he or she is there and why he or she has become involved in illegal activity. The officer should try to obtain insights into the developmental needs of the youth and his or her level of remorse. His or her gang affiliation and the negative ramifications of it should be discussed. The probation officer should convey to the youth that he or she is familiar with the dynamics of gang culture and able to detect continued involvement. Strategies to avoid gang involvement and potential conflicts should be discussed.

*Parents or family members of gang youth should help to enforce the conditions of probation.*

In regard to the parent(s) or family members, the probation officer should try to determine what factors are contributing to the youth's involvement in gang activity (e.g. current or former gang affiliation of family members). Their denial of his or her gang affiliation should also be assessed. The probation officer should stress that the conditions of the youth's probation will be firmly implemented and explain how they can aid in their enforcement. For example, the parent or other family member may have to make sure the youth goes to school or work. They should notify the probation officer when the youth violates curfew restrictions or other conditions of probation.

In certain situations, the juvenile may have a non-supportive parent(s) who is personally dysfunctional, has a history of gang affiliation, and views authority with contempt. Establishing rapport in these instances may be difficult, if not impossible. The probation officer should explain the parent's responsibilities regarding the youth and stress that the parent's lack of cooperation may threaten the safety of the child. Parents should be encouraged to participate in efforts to break the youth's ties with the gang. The probation officer should warn that sanctions may be forthcoming (e.g. contempt findings, fines, making the child a ward of the court) if parental responsibilities are not fulfilled.

*The probation officer should show respect for the gang youth and follow through on his or her commitments.*

Accountability should be the hallmark of the probation officer's relationship with gang probationers, their parents, and significant others. The probation officer should display a high level of professionalism in his or her contacts with them. He or she should show respect and display sensitivity. Moreover, the probation officer should always follow through on his or her commitments and avoid making statements which cannot be backed up with action.

#### Developing and Implementing a Case Plan

*Developing the social competency of the gang youth should be primary.*

*Diagnostic assessments and special treatment of certain problems are important.*

*Social skills training to avoid gang involvement should be provided.*

*Developing a viable educational program for youth should be a top priority.*

Developing the social competency of the youth gang probationer should be at the heart of the supervisory process. The probation officer should spend a great deal of time planning and implementing an academic, social and vocational plan for and with the probationer. The primary goal of the case plan should be to improve the interpersonal, educational, and employment skills of the probationer. To achieve this goal, the caseplan of the youth gang probationer should incorporate the following components:

**Diagnostic, counseling and treatment services.** Youth gang probationers should receive a complete physical and mental health diagnostic assessment when the probation officer suspects or identifies any problems which might hamper the youth's social development, especially in regard to his or her interpersonal capacities and learning skills. Examples of such problems include stuttering, physical deformities, hearing and eyesight problems, learning disabilities, and substance abuse. Referral options should be developed for these services.

**Social skills and support.** To avoid future gang activity and violence the youth gang probationer should have access to counseling and training on the following topics when appropriate:

- ▶ gang avoidance techniques
- ▶ conflict resolution
- ▶ anger management
- ▶ other practical problem-solving skills (e.g. appropriate decision-making, stress management)

Counseling and training on these topics can be provided either by the probation officer, school or social service staff. The probation officer should also inform the youth on how he or she can receive assistance if a personal crisis arises. Toward this end, probation should develop an on-call system whereby a specific probation or duty officer can be reached 24 hours a day.

**Education.** The probation officer must make a viable education for the youth gang probationer a top priority. Probation officers should make an attempt to meet with the teachers and counselors of youth gang probationers to assist in developing a pertinent academic program. Tutoring and remedial education opportunities need to be identified. Placement in an alternative school with planned transition back into a regular school setting may be the best option for youth gang probationers who are particularly disruptive or far behind in their studies.

*Employment can serve as an alternative to the gang.*

**Vocational training and employment.** The world of work can serve as a viable alternative to the gang lifestyle. Therefore, the probation officer or a job developer hired by the department should identify job readiness, vocational training, and employment resources for referral purposes. These resources are particularly essential in developing a case plan for younger youth who have limited academic ability and interests as well as for older youth who are ready for full time employment. Government sponsored (e.g. JPTA, military service) and local private sector programs may be a good starting point.

Close collaboration with the family, the work place, and other agencies is important, especially in regard to the youth's attending work regularly, handling conflicts with his or her job supervisor, and avoiding intimidation of fellow workers. Probation officers should consider placing older youth gang probationers in 2nd or 3rd shift jobs to keep them off of the streets during periods of peak gang activity. Probation officers should also be sensitive to rival gang turfs in job placement decisions.

*Providing assistance to the youth's family should be a part of the case plan.*

**Family assistance.** The probation officer must broker services to the parent(s) or significant family members to improve the youth's chances for successful social readjustment. The probation officer needs to be especially sensitive to the parent's or significant other's personal problems. He or she should assist them with referrals to relevant social services including public aid, housing, legal services, mental health and drug treatment, training and employment. At a minimum he or she should attempt to persuade the parent(s) or spouse to attend support groups and gang relevant education such as parent effectiveness or gang awareness training.

*Community service activities which hold youth accountable can be particularly effective.*

**Community service and recreational activities.** Community service can be used to hold youth accountable for their illegal behavior by providing restitution options. Activities which can provide the youth with opportunities to develop relationships with mentors and acquire skills (e.g. graffiti removal, public housing renovation, and community cleanup programs) are particularly useful. Supervised recreational activities can also provide gang probationers with alternatives to hanging out with the gang.

**Note:** Case plans which mandate participation in well structured activities coupled with a curfew at night can be particularly effective. The intent of the case plan, particularly with hard-core gang members, should be to minimize the time the youth has available to become involved in criminal and gang-related activity.

#### Enforcing Conditions of Probation

*Special terms of probation and supervisory mechanisms will be necessary.*

Legally appropriate special authority and use of sanctions will have to be available to probation officers to deter youth gang probationers from future criminal activity and ensure that they are adhering to their terms of probation. Recommendations include:

*Prohibitions on gang dress and association with gang members.*

**Special Gang Terms.** These terms consist of prohibitions on dress which signifies gang affiliation and association with specified gang members.

Prohibitions on gang dress can be rationalized on the grounds that it intimidates the citizenry and makes the youth a target of rival gang members.

Restrictions on association with members of the youth's gang, should be somewhat flexible, and subject to the discretion of the probation officer. The youth in question should be allowed to associate with other gang members at school provided the youth does not engage in criminal activity. The key consideration should be that the youth not be allowed to "hang out" with gang peers in unsupervised situations, *particularly those with whom he or she had been arrested earlier.* The probation officer should check to make sure that the department's gang rosters are current and that he or she knows all of the youth's fellow gang members.

*Curfew restrictions.*

**Curfew.** This restriction can also be used to deter probationer involvement in criminal activity. The probationer should be mandated to remain at home between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m., particularly to prevent him or her from becoming a victim of retaliatory gang-related violence. Curfew can be combined with electronic supervision (see below).

*Search and seizure power*

**Search and Seizure Power.** This should be requested in instances where the youth gang probationer has a history of weapons and contraband possession. The probation officer should inform the youth and his or her family that he or she has authority to search for and seize illicit items on the youth's person, at his or her home, or in other specified areas. Probation officers should receive training in the use of this procedure. Guidelines and complaint mechanisms should be developed to safeguard against abuse of this authority.

*Drug testing*

**Mandatory Drug Testing.** This should be authorized when the youth gang probationer is a serious offender or has a verified history of drug use and trafficking. Spot testing should be conducted on a regular basis. A portable testing unit should be available to carry this out.

*Frequent home visits and collateral contacts*

**Home Visits and Collateral Contacts.** The probation officer should make home and school visits as well as contact employers, community agency personnel, and others who know the youth. At the initial meeting with the youth gang probationer, the probation officer should schedule a follow-up home visit within ten days, where he or she should observe the social circumstances of the youth. Some of his or her later visits should be unscheduled and conducted at variable times. Repeat visits during the same shift should be made occasionally.

*Home detention and electronic monitoring.*

*Communication networks with other supervisory agencies.*

*Sanctions for probation violations should be swiftly applied.*

**Home Detention and Electronic Supervision.** These options should be considered for high risk, particularly older youth gang probationers who have a history of drug trafficking or serious gang violence.

**Communication Networks with other Supervisory Agencies.** A communication network can be created with other supervisory agencies - police, school, community-based organizations - to exchange information on probationer compliance with court orders. This can be a useful monitoring tool and also provide a means for a probation officer to intervene in crisis situations. In emerging gang problem contexts these contacts should be of an informal nature. In chronic gang problem contexts regular weekly meetings should be held to share information related to the supervision of youth gang probationers.

#### Handling Probation Violations

Consequences for violations of probation should be imposed immediately. The principle of holding the youth accountable for his or her actions should be adhered to; each significant violation should result in some form of consequence. However, the probation officer should also be sensitive to the fact that families are sometimes overwhelmed with the difficulties of setting up appointments, transportation and child care arrangements to comply with court-ordered services. Thus, the probation officer should provide assistance to the family and youth as necessary to ensure that non-compliance is not a function of poverty or an inability to navigate the bureaucracy.

The issue of what penalties to impose is often problematic. Generally, in cases of minor repeat violations, sanctions of increasing severity should be applied. Guidelines for applying incremental sanctions should be developed. Particular care should be taken not to revoke the probation of a youth because of a minor technical violation, especially if it results in his or her placement in a correctional facility where his or her gang lifestyle may become further entrenched. Probationers who clearly demonstrate that they are a threat to the community and themselves as evidenced by continued criminal especially violent, behavior should be violated and removed immediately.

#### Emerging and Chronic Contexts

The structure and process for probation supervision should differ in emerging and chronic gang problem contexts.

#### **Emerging Gang Problem Context**

*Increased supervision and improved educational arrangements should be emphasized in an emerging context.*

In emerging contexts, the age of youth gang members on probation's caseload may range from 11 to 17 years of age. Key program activities and components should include:

- intensive supervision of gang leaders and hard-core gang youth; regular probation supervision for other gang-affiliated youth;
- use of a service referral approach where probation officers act as resource brokers;
- mandatory community service, if possible;
- after school tutoring for youth gang probationers with educational deficits;
- age-appropriate, part and full time employment;
- assignment of volunteer mentors to youth gang probationers, if feasible; and
- referral of the youth's parent(s) or significant other to parental effectiveness or gang awareness training.

#### **Chronic Gang Problem Context**

*More intensive programming will be necessary in chronic contexts.*

In chronic gang problem contexts, the age of youth gang members on probation's caseload may ordinarily range from 14 to 24 years. Key program activities and components besides those listed above should include:

- intensive early intervention programs for first time adjudicated gang youth at high risk of repeat gang offenses;
- regular probation supervision for peripheral gang-affiliated offenders; and
- intensive supervision with possible home detention and electronic monitoring for youth gang offenders with a history of persistent gang-related criminality and violence.



*Creation of a special alternative school program.*

Additionally, creation of a special alternative school should be considered to target educationally deficient, high risk, adjudicated gang probationers. This could possibly be done in conjunction with a community-based youth service agency. The purpose of this school would be to prevent these youth from becoming hard core gang members and career criminals. Program components and activities should include:

- comprehensive case management services
- close supervision and monitoring
- intensive remedial education in reading, writing and math
- special apprenticeship and vocational training opportunities
- mental health and drug treatment
- health education (e.g. personal hygiene, AIDs, etc.)
- family support including parent counseling and referral to educational and employment services

Youth as a rule should be transferred back into regular school programs at the end of a 6 to 12 month period.

### **Summary**

This section detailed the functions and organizational arrangements necessary to competently perform intake on and supervise gang-affiliated youth. Intake officers need to be trained to identify youth gang members to ensure that they are appropriately processed. Guidelines which specify procedures for the detention, release or diversion of particular types of gang youth (e.g., peripheral, regular, hardcore) should be developed and placed in writing. A risk/needs assessment should be conducted to determine the level of supervision and the nature and intensity of services to be provided. The level of supervision should be directly related to the threat the youth poses to the community.

In initiating the supervisory relationship, conditions of probation and the consequences of their violation must be clearly explained to the youth and his or her parent(s). The probation officer should try to obtain information from the youth, parents, and significant others which is useful for the development of an appropriate case plan. The probation officer should display a high level of professionalism at all times and follow through on his or her commitments to the youth.

Several components should be regularly incorporated into the case plans of youth gang probationers. Diagnostic, counseling, and treatment services should be provided to the youth to determine whether there are any particular problems present which are hampering the youth's development. Social skills training and support should be provided to prevent the youth's future involvement in gang activity. Participation in educational, vocational training, employment, and recreational opportunities should be stipulated to allow the youth to develop viable skills and positive social networks. Provision of assistance to family members or significant others should be considered to improve the youth's home setting. In developing a case plan, the probation officer should attempt to minimize the time the youth has available to become involved in gang activity.

To adequately supervise the youth gang probationer, the probation officer may have to utilize several strategies. These can include the use of special gang-related conditions of probation, curfew restrictions, and mandatory drug testing. Visits to the probationer at home and with collateral contacts at school, work, and other places may also be useful. In special cases, the probation officer may require search and seizure authority or need to place the youth under home detention and electronic surveillance. Supervisory networks with other agency personnel can also be established. In handling probation violations, consequences should be imposed immediately and directly proportional to the seriousness of the violation. Finally, the structure and process of supervision should differ according to whether the context is an emerging or chronic gang problem context. Generally, supervisory arrangements should be less structured and utilize existing programs in emerging gang problem contexts; in chronic gang contexts, supervisory arrangements should be more intensive, and special programs specifically for gang youth may need to be created.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FACILITATING INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION**

- Interagency Coordination
- Partnership Relations
- Interagency Coalitions and Community Mobilization
- Summary

#### Interagency Coordination

*Interagency coordination allows agencies to combine resources and develop an integrated approach.*

Close interagency coordination is at the heart of an effective approach to the youth gang problem. Because the probation officer is uniquely linked to the justice and community-based service systems he or she has a special opportunity to coordinate efforts to deal with gang youth in both systems. The chief or deputy chief probation officer should play a pro-active role with other agency or task force members to establish cooperative interagency relationships and a consistent community approach.

*In emerging problem contexts* interagency coordination should be relatively informal with probation concentrating on providing assistance to agencies *to identify and target gang youth for closer supervision and improved outreach services*. *In chronic contexts*, structures of coordination should be more elaborate and formal (e.g. task forces, joint programming, memoranda of understanding) *with greater emphasis on advocacy and resource development*.

A viable plan of cooperation details activities that the participant agencies can carry out in relation to each other and which help them to better fulfill their organizational missions. Persistence, sensitivity to each other's organizational perspective, and a great deal of patience may be necessary to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships.

#### Improving Partnership Relations

*Probation must proactively establish partner relationships.*

Listed below are the actors whom probation will have to target in its community system to develop task-oriented relationships and partnership agreements. Potential reciprocal interagency activities are identified:

#### **Police**

- ◆ Share gang-related information and intelligence
- ◆ Provide probation conditions of gang probationers to police
- ◆ Receive back-up from police in potentially dangerous situations
- ◆ Target gang hot spots with joint police/probation patrols

*Combine intelligence and enforcement resources with the police to suppress youth gang activity.*

Probation officers should be directed to regularly visit police patrol or gang unit officers who patrol their particular jurisdictions. Weekly review of police field investigation cards should become a standard activity along with the sharing of probation conditions of youth gang members with police tactical patrol officers. Police may receive information from informants which can tip probation officers off to probation violations or planned gang activity by youth on their caseload. Probation can provide police with intelligence which will allow them to proactively suppress youth gang activity.

In chronic gang contexts, police may have to provide back up to probation officers during their home visits to gang youth who have a history of violence. During crisis situations probation officers can use their search and seizure powers to provide police with access to homes of youth gang probationers who are suspected of being involved in acts of gang violence. Joint police/probation patrols may be necessary in neighborhoods where residents are intimidated by gang youth.

#### **Prosecutor**

- ◆ Share gang-related information and intelligence
- ◆ Jointly identify gang youth and develop dispositional recommendations
- ◆ Encourage prosecutors to develop a quick prosecution track for probation violators

*Develop beneficial patterns of interaction with prosecutors.*

Standard guidelines with specified responsibilities should be established for prosecutor and probation officer interaction, especially in chronic contexts. Probation officers can provide prosecutors with information about the social circumstances of the gang youth, his or her commitment to the gang lifestyle, and the nature of the intergang conflict under consideration. The prosecutor can provide probation officers with specifics about the crime being investigated and quickly prosecute probation violations.

#### **Public Defender/Defense Attorney**

- ◆ Jointly develop case plan and dispositional recommendations on a regular basis

*Attempt to develop a working relationship with the public defender or defense attorney.*

The public defender needs to understand that some gang youth may need to be taken off the street for their own and the community's protection under certain circumstances. On the other hand, the probation officer must exhibit a sincere interest in the welfare of gang youth and make viable rehabilitative options available to them. A working relationship between the probation officer and the youth's advocate may be difficult to develop, especially in chronic gang problem contexts.

### **Judges**

- ◆ Inform judges about gang-related topics through court reports and special workshops
- ◆ Assist judges in preparing dispositional orders
- ◆ Advocate that the court apply and appropriately enforce specific conditions of probation for youth gang members

*Encourage judges to issue court orders which deter gang activity and mandate participation in pertinent rehabilitative services.*

Probation should attempt to educate judges on the gang problem. Judges should also be encouraged to apply special conditions of probation in cases involving gang youth and to enforce consequences when they are violated. Additionally, the probation officer should strongly advocate for the use of court power to mandate youth and parental participation in educational, employment, community and social service opportunities backed up by judicial review.

### **Detention & Corrections**

- ◆ Provide gang awareness training to detention and corrections staff
- ◆ Share gang-related information and intelligence

*Collaborate with detention and corrections staff.*

Probation in conjunction with the police can provide gang awareness training to detention staff. Detention can then identify gang members for probation when they are detained. In regard to county and state correctional facilities, probation can establish a notification system to make correctional staff aware of a youth's gang affiliation before intake. In return, corrections should make probation aware of gang members released from custody who plan to reside in their jurisdiction.

### **Parole**

- ◆ Share gang-related information and intelligence in regard to gang probationers and parolees

## *Cooperate with parole*

Probation and parole officers should be in regular contact with each other to share the identities, monikers, and other pertinent characteristics of problematic gang probationers and parolees to enhance their supervisory function.

## **Schools**

- ◆ Provide training to school staff on gang-related topics
- ◆ Share gang-related information and intelligence about specific youth on probation and the local gang situation
- ◆ Monitor gang probationers on campus and provide crisis intervention services to school staff
- ◆ Notify the probation department when a youth is expelled
- ◆ Advocate that school officials reinstate difficult gang probationers in school and provide them with an appropriate educational program.
- ◆ Assist school in developing special programs targeted on gang-prone and gang-affiliated youth

*Establish a close relationship with schools to prevent and control school-related gang problems.*

The relationship between probation officers and the staff of schools is important. Probation can provide training to school staff on gang awareness and how to control the disruptive behavior of gang members in the classroom. School staff and probation officers can share academic, vocational, and social information about the gang youth to develop an appropriate case plan. Guidelines to protect student confidentiality and release of information forms will have to be developed to facilitate this process (see Appendix J). Special care should be taken to ensure that this information is not used to expel the youth from school. Youth who are expelled from school should be referred to a probation officer for proper follow up.

Probation should assist the school to develop appropriate programs for gang-prone and affiliated youth. Programs for gang-affiliated youth should have the objective of mainstreaming them back into the regular school population as soon as possible. Probation may want to request space for an on site presence at schools with heavy gang activity.

Both school personnel and probation officers can monitor the behavior of gang members on campus. School staff, including security and counseling personnel, can alert probation officers to potential gang violence and probation officers can respond to

emergencies at the school when gang violence occurs involving gang probationers.

### **Community-based Youth Agencies (CBYAs)**

- ◆ Request the provision of appropriate services to youth gang probationers and their parents.
- ◆ Refer youth gang probationers and their parents to CBYA services
- ◆ Share selective information about gang probationers
- ◆ Provide training and other services to CBYA staff

*Community-based youth agencies can collaborate with probation to provide services to probationers and their families.*

Probation can provide CBYAs with reimbursed referrals and in return request the provision of appropriate services to youth gang probationers and their families. CBYA staff can let the probation officer know whether the youth is adhering to the terms of his or her probation and provide probation with information related to gang activity in their catchment area.

Probation should offer training to CBYA staff on how to deal with gang youth. Additionally, probation can monitor youth gang probationers at CBYA settings, and provide crisis intervention services (e.g., counseling) to them when requested by CBYA staff.

### **Grassroots Organizations (GOs) & Churches**

- ◆ Provide training on gang-related topics
- ◆ Request grassroots organizations and churches to monitor specific gang probationers in the community as appropriate
- ◆ Encourage GOs and churches to provide probationers with pertinent services and activities
- ◆ Promote the formation of support groups among the parents of gang probationers.

*Probation should encourage GOs and churches to actively confront the youth gang problem.*

A solution to the youth gang problem must involve residents from the affected communities. Churches and grassroots organizations, particularly in the form of citizen and parent groups, must be mobilized by probation in conjunction with the police and community-based agencies.

If resources permit, probation can train these groups to participate in crime prevention activities including citizen patrols at schools, parks, and playgrounds. These groups can also monitor gang probationers in the community and provide these youth and their parent(s) with activities and services which promote positive social adjustment. A special effort should be made to organize support groups for parents of gang youth.

### **Local Business and Industry**

- ◆ Advocate that local businesses provide training and employment to gang probationers
- ◆ Monitor youth gang probationers on the job and provide crisis intervention services in employment settings

*Advocate for jobs and assist in supervising gang youth at work.*

Employers must be informed that gang youth can become valuable employees with proper support. Probation officers in conjunction with CBYA and GO staff should solicit employers to hire youth gang probationers and offer to provide them with follow up support services to alleviate their fears of taking a perceived risk. This group should also advocate that JPTA, the Private Industry Council and other government job training programs fund alternative employment programming for gang-involved youth, particularly the hard-core.

### **Media**

- ◆ Develop policies and guidelines for dealing with the media.
- ◆ Establish relationships with the media regarding reporting of gang-related information.
- ◆ Share information and provide reporters with a knowledge base about gangs.



*Establish a good working relationship with the media.*

A good working relationship with the media is an important element of probation's response to the gang problem. Due to the highly volatile nature of the problem and the media's tendency to sensationalize the issue in their reporting, the probation department will need to develop a media policy for the department. This policy should designate a public information officer or an administrator to handle media requests for information. The policy should stipulate that complete and accurate information be provided to the media on a regular basis. However, names of juveniles, gang names, specific locations of gang turf, and gang modus operandi should be omitted. The media should be encouraged to adopt similar guidelines for reporting gang information to avoid providing status to gangs and gang members, prevent activities of retaliation, and limit the possibility of mimicry of gang behavior by other youth.

Additionally, the media should be routinely invited to the probation department meetings on the gang issue. Knowledge about gang characteristics, gang development in the area, and evolving means to deal with the problem should be provided. The media should be encouraged to report on services that probation has available to youth, parents and other members of the community affected by the problem.

#### Interagency Coalitions & Community Mobilization

*Develop an integrated approach which mobilizes the community.*

On a broader scale probation can seek to form interagency coalitions and conduct community education campaigns to promote an integrated community response to the problem. Key activities should include:

*Advocate for problem recognition and efficient targeting of resources.*

**1. Advocating for Problem Recognition.** In emerging problem contexts probation may have to take a lead role in helping the community to recognize and focus resources on the youth gang problem. In situations where denial of the problem exists probation may have to become a risk taker by using the media and encouraging residents affected by gang activity to pressure authorities to recognize the problem. Special care should be taken to not exaggerate the problem in the process.

*Establish a consensus on what constitutes a gang, gang members, and gang incident.*

**2. Developing a Definitional and Policy Consensus.** One of the first items on the coalition's agenda should be to establish a definitional consensus on key gang terms - gang, gang member, and gang incident - to ensure that resources are well targeted on the problem and used efficiently. Disagreements as to definitions will invariably arise and probation should attempt to move the group toward some type of consensus in a way that does not alienate coalition members. General policy consensus by criminal justice and community actors is vital to properly coordinate programs and ensure that the approach is consistent across agencies.

*Create interagency networks to monitor and proactively intervene with probationers.*

*Cultivate efforts to educate the community about the problem.*

*Advocate for program funding at the legislative and local levels.*

**3. Creating Intelligence and Supervisory Networks.** Probation should utilize interagency networks as means to improve its intelligence and supervisory functions. This network should allow probation officers to effectively monitor whether youth gang probationers are violating their conditions of probation. Committee or task force structures which meet at least once a month and more frequently during crisis periods can be formed for this purpose. Separate networks may have to be developed for criminal justice and community-based actors due to the sensitivity of particular types of information exchanged. Members of these networks should attempt to establish a consensus on what type of information will be shared (e.g. gang member identification, criminal activity, case plan information) and guidelines for its use.

Additionally, practical programming arrangements can arise from these interagency coalitions which lead to probation's participation in joint programming efforts. Examples can include special arrangements between criminal justice agencies and schools. For samples of interagency agreements refer to Appendix K.

**4. Conducting Community Education Campaigns.** Probation, in conjunction with coalition members, should carry out gang education campaigns to mobilize the community. The primary objective of these efforts should be to educate parents, religious leaders, school personnel, parent/teacher organizations, landlords, merchants, business and civic leaders in gang awareness and social development strategies to combat gang activities. Probation officers should identify opportunities to speak to the community and citizen's groups about the problem. A supplementary objective should be to recruit community members to become gang awareness trainers.

**5. Promoting Political Advocacy and Resource Development.** Probation can assist interagency coalitions to monitor proposed legislation and mobilize political interests to support or oppose initiatives related to the gang problem. Of special importance are advocacy initiatives to fund social support and opportunity provision programs for gang youth. Further, coalitional advocacy efforts should be undertaken at the local level with chambers of commerce, businessmen's groups, JTPA councils, and politicians to create employment programs and jobs for older gang youth.

### **Summary**

Ways to foster interagency coordination and community mobilization initiatives was the topic of this section. At the heart of improving coordination between probation and other agencies is the identification of mutually beneficial activities which fulfill organizational mission objectives. Several reciprocal activities can be identified which are beneficial to both probation and other criminal justice organizations including the police, prosecutor,

public defender, the court, detention, corrections, and parole. These include the sharing of gang-related intelligence and information, identifying gang youth, jointly developing case plan and dispositional recommendations, and providing gang-related training. Probation can also carry out a number of advantageous interagency activities with other organizations such as schools, community-based youth agencies, grassroots organizations, churches, business and industry, and the media. These include sharing gang-related information, joint monitoring of probationer behavior, training on gang-related topics, the provision of pertinent services and opportunities for gang youth, and advocacy for additional resources.

Probation should also attempt to form an interagency coalition to develop a community mobilization agenda. Potential collaborative activities could involve advocating for recognition of the gang problem if denial is present, developing a definitional and policy consensus with respect to the issue, creating intelligence and supervisory networks to improve interagency communication, conducting community education campaigns, and promoting resource developmental and political advocacy with respect to certain issues.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **SELECTING AND TRAINING STAFF**

- Developing a Job Description
- Screening and Selecting Probation Candidates
- Providing Orientation and Training
- Summary

Selecting appropriate staff and providing them with useful training are vital to the success of a probation gang program. Tasks include:

*The position should have special gang-related requirements.*

**1. Developing a Job Description** - Beyond the standard items contained in most probation job descriptions, it is important that special gang-related requirements of the position be incorporated including:

- ▶ a familiarity with and understanding of gang youth;
- ▶ a successful history of community agency or criminal justice experience and a demonstrated capacity to reach out to inner city youth;
- ▶ a demonstrated ability to exercise firmness yet provide effective support to gang youth;
- ▶ a willingness to work variable shifts including evenings, weekends, and long hours during gang crises;
- ▶ a willingness to spend a large portion of work time out in the community, making home visits and developing resources to monitor and rehabilitate youth gang probationers; and
- ▶ good writing and verbal skills as demonstrated by a capacity to familiarize the judge with gang-related matters in reports to the court.

*Flexibility in hiring is essential.*

**2. Screening and Selecting a Candidate** - Candidates should be screened and ranked according to the requirements specified above. To ensure that the probation officer is highly motivated for the job, probation officers should not be reassigned to a gang probation officer position without their consent.

The supervisor's ability to select the best candidate for the position may be limited by union or civil service regulations. Regulations related to educational, experiential and seniority requirements may place minority candidates from inner city areas at a disadvantage. Considerable flexibility should be allowed in recruitment and hiring to assure selection of culturally-sensitive and skilled staff. However, certain minimum requirements (e.g. a bachelors degree) should be maintained.

*Careful screening is necessary to assess the candidate's potential.*

It is important to make sure that the candidate knows what he or she is getting into, particularly in chronic gang problem contexts where officer safety might be a concern. Toward this end, the candidate should spend some time with staff both in the office and the field to become more familiar with the job duties before a hiring decision and job acceptance occurs. Safety concerns and requirements related to cooperation with police authorities, street outreach duties, weapons, body armor, and other related topics should be discussed as appropriate.

Recommendations from other gang probation officers should be given special consideration in the final selection decision.

*Orientation and training should adequately prepare staff for their duties.*

**3. Providing Orientation and Training** - Basic topics to be covered in an orientation and training plan related to gangs include:

- ▶ a description of the gang program's mission, goals, objectives, strategies, policies and procedures;
- ▶ the structure and design of the gang program including lines of authority and the specific duties of each position in the unit;
- ▶ an overview of the gang program's information systems and record keeping requirements; and
- ▶ a review of the gang program's relationship with the probation department and other agencies concerning information-sharing, case transfers, surveillance, and delivery of services in regard to gang youth.

*Training on specific gang-related topics should be provided.*

Training should be part of an ongoing staff development process for new hires and regular personnel. Specific gang-related training topics to be covered should include:

- ▶ pertinent gang-related legislation;
- ▶ characteristics of local street and prison gangs including their history and patterns of organization and behavior;
- ▶ patterns of local gang criminality including intergang violence, drug use, drug trafficking and property crime;

- ▶ officer safety issues including assessing potentially dangerous situations, weapons identification, physical restraint and self defense training;
- ▶ proper use of gang-related information in court and interagency reports;
- ▶ testifying as an expert witness;
- ▶ social investigation and probationer supervision skills including effective case planning;
- ▶ crisis intervention strategies and techniques;
- ▶ search and seizure guidelines such as planning the search, recognizing contraband, establishing a chain of evidence, and handling reluctant searchees and their collaterals;
- ▶ public relations and speaking skills; and
- ▶ community resource development and mobilization techniques.

*Trainers from a variety of disciplines should be recruited to conduct the workshops.*

The chief probation officer, particularly in emerging gang problem contexts, may have to recruit expert facilitators to conduct these training sessions. This may entail bringing in experts of different backgrounds - police, prosecutors, corrections, school, youth agency staff, and academics - from other jurisdictions. A good starting point may be to contact the police gang unit in a nearby major metropolitan city or the National Center for State and Local Law Enforcement Training, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center located in Glynco, Georgia. Some sample course descriptions related to the above training topics are located in Appendix L.

### **Summary**

Human resource issues concerning the administration of a probation gang program are enumerated in this section. Tasks covered include developing a job description, screening and selecting candidates and providing appropriate orientation and training. Job descriptions should incorporate requirements directly

related to probation work with gang youth. These include having a demonstrated understanding of and ability to work with gang youth, a willingness to work variable hours, and an interest in spending a substantial amount of time in the community. The rigors and challenges of gang work should be clearly explained to all job candidates. Once hired, the probation officer should be oriented to the operations of the gang position or program, particularly in regard to its policies and procedures, structure and design, and interorganizational relationships. Training topics should include patterns of gang crime, characteristics of local gangs, officer safety issues, and crisis intervention strategies and techniques.

## CHAPTER 9

### PROGRAM RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- Process Indicators
- Outcome Indicators
- Summary

*Process and outcome effects have to be determined.*

A framework for research and evaluation will have to be developed to determine whether the probation gang program is successfully meeting its goals and objectives. Both process and outcome research should be conducted. Process indicators provide information primarily related to the implementation of probation functions. Outcome indicators provide information related to the impact of probation activities on youth gang probationer behavior. Process indicators should focus on:

*How well is the gang program carrying out its functions?*

1. Assessment of gang intelligence
  - ▶ accuracy and reliability of the gang intelligence system
  - ▶ effectiveness of the interagency exchange of gang intelligence
  - ▶ identification of gaps in intelligence
2. Quality of probation officer case reports
  - ▶ accuracy, completeness, and utility of contact logs, files, PSI and supplemental reports

3. Enforcement of special gang-related conditions
  - ▶ responsiveness of the court to probation officer recommendations regarding special gang conditions
  - ▶ extent to which probation officers enforce gang conditions ( e.g., urine testing, patrols in the field, home visits, collateral contacts, etc.)
  - ▶ evaluation of technical violation process
4. Level of supervision provided to youth gang probationers
  - ▶ assessment of the level and quality of supervision provided to each type of youth gang probationer
5. Assessment of services delivered to youth gang probationers
  - ▶ number and type of services delivered to different types of youth gang probationer
  - ▶ identification of service gaps
6. Assessment of community mobilization efforts by probation officers
  - ▶ joint interagency activities
  - ▶ interagency agreements
  - ▶ participation on interagency task forces and attendance at meetings
  - ▶ gang-related training sessions provided in the community
7. Staff assessment
  - ▶ staff performance reviews



- ▶ staff turnover rates
- ▶ staff trainings and development activities

An analysis of information related to these seven categories should provide the department with a good idea about how well the probation gang program is being implemented. Periodic reports would be useful in monitoring program activity and making appropriate program adjustments.

*How effective is the gang program in controlling the gang crime of its probationers?*

Outcome indicators should focus on:

1. Justice system processing of youth gang probationers
  - ▶ results of court screening and transfer decisions
  - ▶ outcomes of probation supervision particularly in regard to probation dismissal and revocation rates
2. The short and long term effects of probation on youth gang probationers
  - ▶ recidivism rates including a summary of crimes committed, gang and non-gang related;
  - ▶ the extent and nature of the youth gang probationer's relationship with the gang and gang members during and after his or her probation term;
  - ▶ school performance (e.g. attendance, grades, conduct, graduation rates);
  - ▶ employment performance.

Several key questions should be asked concerning the relation between process and outcome measures for youth gang probationers. Specifically: How effective are specific probation services in reducing recidivism? Are gang youth who are assigned to regular probation, intensive probation, and incarceration having different outcomes in regard to rates of recidivism? Are community mobilization efforts by probation officers lowering gang crime rates in targeted communities?

Independent researchers should be employed to assess the quality of implementation and the effectiveness of the gang program.

### **Summary**

In this section, the need for good research and evaluation to determine the results of a probation approach to gang activity has been stressed. Process indicators should be developed which measure the extent to which the approach is implemented. These indicators should assess: 1) the quality of gang intelligence; 2) probation officer case reports; 3) enforcement of gang-related conditions; 4) level of supervision and services provided to youth gang probationers; 5) community mobilization efforts by probation officers, and management of staff. Outcome indicators should be developed to measure the results of the program. Particular emphasis should be placed on whether the approach is reducing recidivism by gang probationers; youth assigned to different dispositional tracks have different recidivism rates; and gang crime rates have declined in the targeted communities.