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Evaluation of San José's Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force

OJJDP FIRE Grant 2012-MU-FX-0011

Prepared by:

Resource Development Associates



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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

Evaluation Overview

Since 2011, the City of San José's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) has partnered with Resource Development Associates (RDA) and Dr. Jeffrey Butts from John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct an evaluation of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF).

Since its inception, the MGPTF has gained widespread acclaim. In 2008, the National League of Cities and National Center on Crime and Delinquency recognized the initiative as a promising approach¹. In 2010, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention invited the City of San José to join as one of six cities in the nation working with federal agencies to share promising strategies and identify opportunities for federal agencies to enhance support local efforts². Despite this acclaim, there has not been a comprehensive, rigorous evaluation of the Task Force to shed light on the factors that have made it successful over time, nor to examine its impact on the community. This evaluation responds to that need by examining (1) the evolution and implementation of the MGPTF over 20 years and (2) the associations between MGPTF activities and youth outcomes and gang violence over 20 years.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. How have the framework, strategies, and implementation of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force changed over time?
2. Does MGPTF employ effective strategies that differ from the research? How does the MGPTF model differ from established best practices?
3. To what extent is MGPTF activities associated with reduced gang involvement and crime across the City?
4. To what extent is MGPTF activities associated with reduced gang involvement and crime across among BEST service recipients?

Implementation and Evolution of MGPTF: Key Findings

- ❖ **Cross-sector partnerships and community engagement.** From the beginning, the Mayor framed the gang issue as a "youth services issue," framing the problem as a community-wide issue, which resulted in strong stakeholder buy-in. The Task Force elicited the support of a wide array of leaders and service providers across sectors (e.g., education, law enforcement, social services). In addition, the Task Force worked in partnership with the community to address the City's gang violence issue.

¹ National League of Cities & National Center on Crime and Delinquency. (2008). Implementing a citywide gang violence reduction strategy: Three promising examples.

² The United States Attorney's Office: Northern District of California. (2016). United States Attorney Haag speaks in Salinas as part of national forum on youth violence prevention. Retrieved from: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndca/united-states-attorney-haag-speaks-salinas-part-national-forum-youth-violence-prevention>



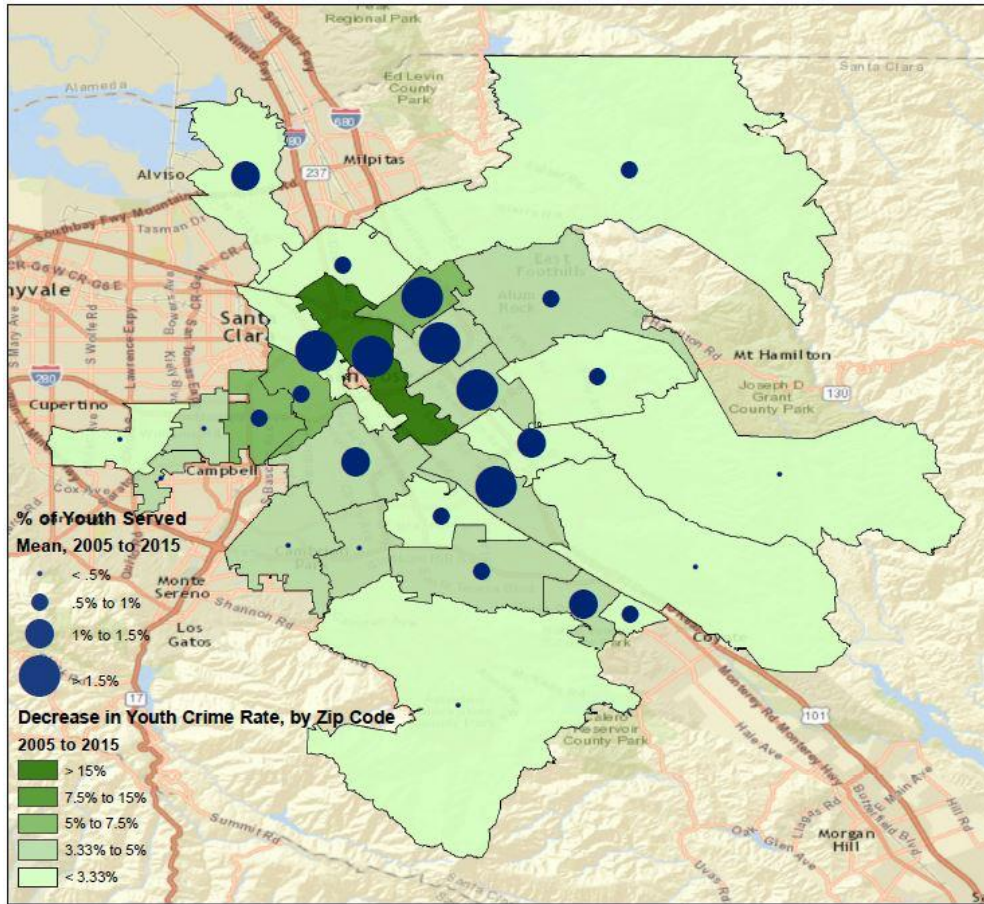
- ❖ **Data-driven decision-making and information sharing.** Establishing a working group comprised of cross-sector leadership was critical to the MGPTF's efficacy, allowing for on-the-spot decision-making during times of community crisis. Additionally, implementing a results-based accountability (RBA) system ensured that programs continued to align with the MGPTF's strategic plans. Instituting program evaluation led to the prioritization of data-informed decision making and depoliticized funding and resource allocation decisions without compromising collaboration and partnership.
- ❖ **Balance of local knowledge with evidence-based practices.** Throughout its history, the MGPTF utilized OJJDP as a strategic resource. Members of the Task Force combined the local knowledge provided by the City's residents with OJJDP-identified best practices to guide the design of the MGPTF's strategic frameworks and Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) programs. The result was a nationally-recognized violence prevention and intervention model specific to the City of San José, while generalizable to other jurisdictions.

Changes in Youth Crime and Gang Involvement: Key Findings

Client Outcomes and City-Wide Outcomes

- ❖ **BEST Services are associated with neighborhood-level reductions in youth arrests.** San José neighborhoods with greater density of BEST services experience greater reductions in youth arrest rates than did neighborhoods in which fewer youth participated in BEST services. This is true for violent arrests and for all arrests (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percent of youth served by BEST compared to the decrease in youth crime, from 2005 to 2015, by zip code



- ❖ **Clients experienced reduced juvenile justice system involvement.** Youth were 82% less likely to be referred to SCCPD for an alleged delinquent offense and 87% less likely to be adjudicated with a sustained delinquent offense after enrolling in a BEST program. Youth who had contact with the Santa Clara County Probation Department (SCCPD) both before and after enrolling in a BEST program had 65% fewer referrals and 33% fewer sustained delinquent offenses than they did prior to program participation, indicating that while they may have continued to engage in some delinquent behaviors, they did so with less frequency.

Figure 2: Percent of BEST clients referred to SCCPD before and after BEST program enrollment

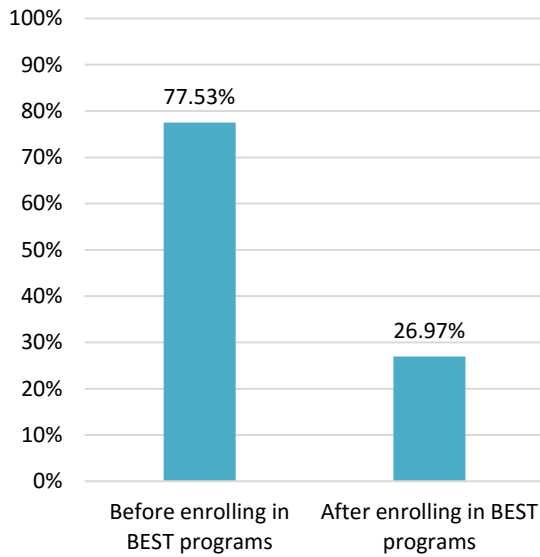
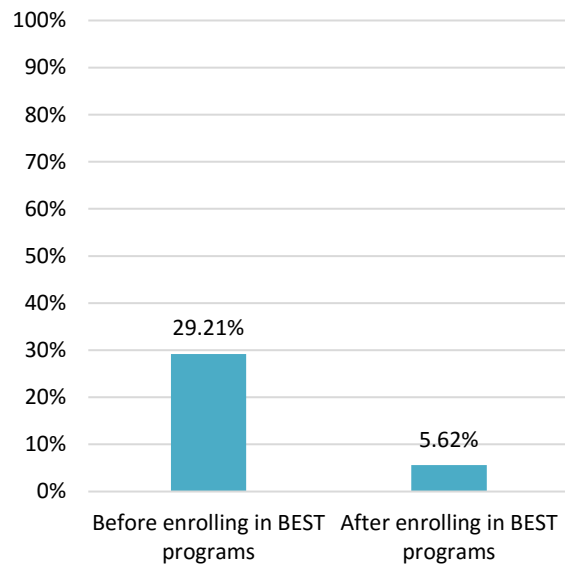


Figure 3: Percent of BEST clients with sustained delinquent offenses before and after BEST program enrollment



Introduction

Overview

In 1991, The City of San José's Mayor Susan Hammer convened the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) to formally establish a citywide approach to rising youth crime, especially gang-related youth crime. Building on emerging research from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and leveraging previous cross-agency collaborations in San José, the MGPTF brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders to develop a coordinated approach to reducing youth violence. This group included the San José Police Department (SJPD); the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS); and a range of community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-leaders, and advocates. In the years since the Task Force first began, the MGPTF has evolved, bringing on new partners, developing new infrastructures for communication and collaboration, and integrating new research on best practices in violence prevention.

As one of the first multi-sector, citywide initiatives to implement and build upon best practices in community-based violence prevention, the MGPTF has become widely known as a model initiative and the City of San José has been recognized as an innovative leader in crime prevention.³ Moreover, the Task Force, including the PRNS-administered direct service programs (collectively known as Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together, or BEST), has been widely recognized as a leader in gang prevention, and has been touted as a model intervention by OJJDP's National Youth Violence Prevention Forum and the State of California's Gang Prevention Network. In April 2011, MGPTF members participated in the National Summit on Preventing Youth Violence in Washington, DC and presented a comprehensive plan for reducing youth violence by adapting and enhancing existing local initiatives. MGPTF leaders are frequently asked to travel to or host delegations from other communities to provide guidance to communities seeking to establish similar programs, including 17 different cities and counties from across the US over the past five years.

Despite widespread recognition, the Task Force has never undergone a comprehensive evaluation. While evaluations of program-level data from BEST-funded community-based service providers have been analyzed to determine effectiveness across measures associated with gang involvement—particularly resiliency and developmental assets—there has been no evaluation of the broader initiative that has sought to understand how this innovative, multi-sector approach to addressing community violence was conceived of, developed, and implemented, nor of how the Task Force has evolved to continue its relevance and effectiveness over more than two decades.

In 2011, Resource Development Associates (RDA), in collaboration with San José's PRNS, received a Field Initiated Research and Evaluation (FIRE) grant from OJJDP to conduct a multi-year evaluation of MGPTF in

³ The Bridgespan Group. (2012). *Needle-moving community collaboratives. Case study: San Jose.*

order to assess the implementation and impact of the Task Force over the course of its existence and identify potential lessons for other cities considering similar efforts. The first part of the evaluation effort, completed in 2013, was a retrospective evaluation that examined the development, implementation, and impact of MGPTF from its inception through 20 years of existence, assessing how the Task Force has evolved to remain successful over time.

Building on those efforts, the second part of this evaluation, completed in 2015, provided a more in-depth analysis of the impact of the Task Force on youth crime in San José. This second phase examined both citywide and client-specific crime and delinquency, with a particular focus on the impact of on the MGPTF's violence prevention and intervention services administered via PRNS and delivered by contracted community-based service providers.

This report combines the findings from those two evaluation efforts to present a comprehensive assessment of the implementation, evolution, and impact of San José's MGPTF. This report begins with a brief summary of the evaluation's key findings and moves into a more in-depth discussion of the implementation and impact of the MGPTF. Following the summary of findings, this report then presents the methodologies for both phases of the evaluation, followed by evaluation findings related to the implementation of the MGPTF from 1991 through 2013 and findings on the impact of the MGPTF—particularly the BEST direct service continuum—on youth crime and gang involvement in San José.

Summary of Findings

Implementation and Evolution of MGPTF

- ❖ **Cross-sector partnerships and community engagement.** From the beginning, the Mayor framed the problem as a “youth services issue,” cataloging the gang issue as a community-wide issue. This resulted in strong stakeholder buy-in. The Task Force elicited the support of a wide array of leaders and service providers across sectors (e.g., education, law enforcement, social services). In addition, the Task Force worked in partnership with the community to address the City’s gang violence issue.
- ❖ **Data-driven decision making and information sharing.** Establishing a working group comprised of cross-sector leadership was critical to the MGPTF’s efficacy, allowing for on-the-spot decision making during moments of community crisis. Additionally, instituting program evaluation as a central activity by implementing a results-based accountability (RBA) system ensured programs continued to align with MGPTF’s strategic plans. This prioritized data-informed decision-making, depoliticizing funding and resource allocation decisions without compromising collaboration and partnership.
- ❖ **Balance of local knowledge with evidence-based practices.** Throughout its history, the MGPTF utilized OJJDP as a strategic resource. Members of the Task Force combined the local knowledge provided by the City’s residents with OJJDP-identified best practices to guide the design of the MGPTF’s strategic frameworks and BEST programs. The result was a nationally-recognized violence prevention and intervention model specific to the City of San José, while generalizable to other jurisdictions.

Changes in Youth Crime over Course of the MGPTF

- ❖ **Youth crime by neighborhood.** San José neighborhoods with greater density of BEST services experienced greater reductions in youth arrest rates than did neighborhoods in which fewer youth participated in BEST services. This was true for arrests for all crime as well as arrests for violent crime.
- ❖ **Client juvenile justice system involvement.** Youth were 82% less likely to be referred to SCCPD for an alleged delinquent offense and 87% less likely to be adjudicated with a sustained delinquent offense after enrolling in a BEST program. Youth who had contact with SCCPD both before and after enrolling in a BEST program had 65% fewer referrals and 33% fewer sustained delinquent offenses than they did prior to program participation, indicating that while they may have continued to engage in some delinquent behaviors, they did so with less frequency.
- ❖ **Youth gang involvement.** Youth gang affiliation in the City of San José decreased by almost 19%, notably faster than the 6% decrease among youth in the rest of the County, according to the California Healthy Kids Survey (data available between 1999/2000 and 2011/2012).



Methodology

Implementation and Evolution of MGPTF

Documentary Data Review

RDA began the qualitative data collection process with a review of historical Task Force documentary data. This review encompassed document sources such as the triennial strategic work plans; program descriptions and scopes of work; data tracking and referral documents; meeting notes and agendas for the Task Force Policy and Technical Teams; Memoranda of Understanding and contracts between Task Force organizations; Requests for Qualifications and grant applications for BEST-funded programs; evaluation reports for BEST and other Task Force components; and promotional materials.

The document review informed analysis of how the framework, strategies, and implementation of the Task Force have changed over time, as well as Task Force alignment with best practices gleaned from the literature review discussed below.

Literature Review

RDA conducted a literature review of best practices of initiatives that focus on violence prevention, gangs, juvenile justice involvement, and other related domains. In an initiative funded by OJJDP, the National Gang Center has served as a repository for best practices research, and has developed a summary of all research related to community-based initiatives on youth violence prevention and gang reduction strategies.⁴ RDA reviewed this research and identified emerging practices that distinguish successful violence prevention initiatives as models to be emulated.

RDA then compared these best practices with additional initiative-level strategies that support the establishment and sustainability of a violence prevention initiative.⁵ RDA separated the identified best practices into four general categories: Community Mobilization, Assessment and Planning, Program Implementation, and Organizational Change and Development. Many best practice strategies do not fit cleanly into one category, and may overlap several or all categories. RDA then compared these identified

⁴ National Gang Center. (2010, October 1). Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems: OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231200.pdf>

⁵ For example, About TCFV. (n.d.). Texas Council on Family Violence » Nine Key Elements of Best Practice Prevention Programs. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <http://www.tcfv.org/our-work/prevention/nine-key-elements-of-best-practice-prevention-programs>; One on one, one by one. : Peace Over Violence. (n.d.). Peace Over Violence. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <http://www.peaceoverviolence.org/>; Communities that Care Prevention Strategies Guide. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <http://www.sdr.org/ctcresource/Prevention%20Strategies%20Guide/introduction.pdf>; Boston Ten Point Coalition - About Us. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <http://btpc.org/about.php>; OJJDP Strategic Planning Tool. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT/Planning-Implementation/Best-Practices>; The Model. (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <http://cureviolence.org/what-we-do/the-model/>



best and promising practices with Task Force practices, identifying areas of practice alignment and areas of practice innovation.

Interviews with Current and Former Task Force Members

RDA conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with 10 current and 12 former members of the Task Force, to examine how the framework, strategies, and implementation of the Task Force have changed over time. KIIs were conducted during March and April of 2013 (current Task Force members) and during October and November of 2013 (former Task Force members). These interviews also informed analysis of Task Force alignment with best practices in violence prevention initiatives.

Name	Position
1 Albert Balagso	Former Director, San José 's Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services; Former Superintendent, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
2 Angel Rios, Jr.	Assistant Director, San José 's Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services; Former Superintendent, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
3 Aturo Catbagan	Former Community Services Supervisor of Youth Intervention, City of San José
4 Chuck Reed	Mayor, City of San José
5 Cora Tomalinas	Community Activist, P.A.C.T
6 Derek Chen	Lieutenant, City of San José Police Department
7 Dick De La Rosa	Former Gang Policy Manager for Mayor Hammer
8 Esther Mota	Community Services Supervisor, City of San José
9 Jeff Bornefeld	Executive Director, Community Partners for Youth
10 Jeff Rosen	District Attorney, Santa Clara County
11 Jesus Rios	Assistant Principal, Yerba Buena High School
12 John Cook/John Cooks	Former Crime Prevention Unit, San José Police Department
13 John Porter	Superintendent, Franklin McKinley School District
14 Jose Mosely	Former Community Services Supervisor of Youth Intervention, City of San José
15 Mario Maciel	Division Manager, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
16 Mark Buller	Chief Assistant District Attorney, Santa Clara County
17 Michael Pritchard	Executive Director, Pathway Society, Inc.; Founding Member, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
18 Norberto Dueñas	Deputy City Manager, City of San José
19 Rich Saito	Former Lieutenant, City of San José Police Department
20 Ron Soto	Former Deputy Director, Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force
21 Sheila Mitchell	Former Chief Probation Officer, Santa Clara County
22 So'o Pomele	Street Outreach, Catholic Charities

Changes in Youth Crime and Gang Involvement

Reductions in Youth Crime in BEST Areas

RDA obtained data from the San José Police Department (SJPD) on all arrests from 2006 through 2015 in the city of San José. RDA then used ArcGIS to geocode all of the arrest locations so that arrests could be linked to the zip codes that they occurred within. RDA also obtained BEST youth program service data that indicated the number of youth served within each zip code. Since BEST programs serve youth, RDA examined arrest rates only for individuals under 18 years old. RDA then calculated the slope of the arrest rates from 2006 through 2015 for each San José zip code.

RDA examined the correlation between the percentage of youth served in each zip code between 2006 and 2015 and the change in the youth arrest rates and the change in violent crime arrest rates from 2006 through 2015. For this analysis, the violent crime slope is the dependent variable and the independent variable is the percentage of youth served in each zip code. The correlation between the percentage of youth served and arrest rates was calculated using an Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS) model. The total number of observations for this analysis is the number of zip codes included in the study N=26.

Reductions in Juvenile Justice System Involvement among BEST Youth

For this effort, RDA conducted two phases of data collection—the first to collect individual service data and the second to collect individual probation data.

Service Data Collection. RDA collaborated with the nine BEST programs to collect service data for individuals who were already enrolled or were in the process of enrolling in BEST programs. After individuals enrolled in the programs, the BEST programs obtained written consent from clients to use their data for evaluation. For clients who were under age 18, the programs obtained parental consent. The data collection included individual-level client information:

- First and last names
- Date of birth
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Program enrollment and exit dates
- Service receipt information, including types and duration

Probation Data Collection. Using the identifying client information (name, date of birth, race/ethnicity, and gender), RDA submitted a data request to SCCPD for referral and sustained delinquent offense data for each consented BEST client. The data request included case-level information of referrals and offenses that occurred during the study period (between October 1, 2012 and October 31, 2015) accrued by each consented BEST client:

- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Name
- Name Suffix
- Date of Birth
- Zip code
- Gender
- Race
- Case Number
- Referral Date
- Referred Offense (most serious offense only)
- Arrest Date
- Finding Date, if applicable
- Sustained Offense, if applicable (most serious offense only)
- Court Disposition
- Court Disposition Date

SCCPD determined if consented BEST clients had a record by matching their identifying information to like information in the SCCPD database. SCCPD only provided case data for the consented clients who matched their database and only for cases that occurred during the study period. Among the 253 BEST clients who agreed to share their data with the evaluation, 89 had an existing SCCPD record.⁶ These young people were enrolled in services provided by four BEST-funded CBOs: Alum Rock Counseling Center, HealthRight360, Bill Wilson Center, and Fresh Lifelines for Youth.⁷

Using the identifying client information (name, date of birth, race/ethnicity, and gender), RDA matched individual-level BEST service data to case-level SCCPD data. Following the data matching process, RDA conducted a series of descriptive analyses to describe the study population, inclusive of demographic distributions, referrals to the juvenile probation department, and adjudication for delinquent offenses, pre-program enrollment and post-program enrollment. To study the impact of BEST programming on referrals and adjudications, RDA conducted a paired sample analysis that compared BEST clients' justice system referrals and adjudications prior to enrolling in program and after enrolling in program.

Reductions in Gang Involvement in BEST Communities

To understand student gang involvement in San José over time and provide a city-wide context, RDA analyzed data from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). CHKS is administered every other school year, so RDA analyzed biennial data beginning with the 1999-2000 school year and ending with the 2011-2012 school years. RDA received CHKS data from WestEd with the approval of the California Department of Education for students attending Santa Clara County schools. Since CHKS does not ask youth their city of residence, RDA used school location as a proxy for city of residence and recoded the data as either San José or Outside of San José. Thirty of the 242 school codes could not be identified, so the students attending those schools are only included in the total percent of gang-involved students in Santa Clara

⁶ According to the SCCPD, over the last five years as the number of informally and formally justice engaged youth has decreased by 50% and more than 45% of the citations/arrests that are referred to the Department are handled informally, with a large percentage of those youth only receive an oral or letter of reprimand. Because of this, while many BEST youth are at risk for justice system involvement and/or have had negative contact with law enforcement, a smaller proportion are actually on formal supervision and thus have data available for evaluation.

⁷ Two other programs also had clients who matched to SCCPD, but did not have any referrals or offenses within the study period. These individuals likely had prior referrals and/or sustained offenses that occurred prior to the study period. The programs were the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter (SJCC) Ujima.



County and not the San José/Outside of San José breakdown. WestEd determined that the unknown school codes were for schools associated with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, which manages the county's alternative schools. The unidentified school codes were only used for data analysis for the school years 1999-2000, 2001-2002, and 2003-2004 and represented 6.90%, 0.22%, and 0.45% of the students participating in the CHKS survey for those years respectively. Therefore, the data presented likely underrepresents the percent of gang-involved students from San José and from Outside of San José for those three years, particularly 1999-2000.

Gang involvement was determined based on students' response to a question asking if they were affiliated with a gang. For the school years 1999-2000 to 2003-2004, students were asked, "Have you ever belonged to a gang?" For the school years 2005-2006 to 2011-2013, students were asked, "Do you consider yourself a member of a gang?" In addition to comparing students' gang involvement by location, RDA also examined San José student gang involvement by ethnicity.

Limitations

There are a number of important limitations to this research. First and foremost among this is the lack of systems or processes for consistently defining and tracking gang-related crime in San Jose over the period covered in this project. Although SJDPD does track gang incidents, the definitions they have used to do so have changed over time, but no one in the Department appears to have kept a log of how these definitions have changed nor when these changes have occurred. Moreover, while SCCPD has tracked "gang-related conditions" for youth placed on Probation due to gang-related activity, the processes by which incidents are identified as gang-related and youth given "gang conditions" have been inconsistent. Moreover, both SJDPD and SCCPD have utilized and then decommissioned several different data systems over the past 20+ years, all of which have had different ways of tracking incidents and individuals, gang related or otherwise. To address these data limitations, this project uses a series of proxies rather than measuring actual changes in gang crime. Measures used here include youth arrest rates for violent and nonviolent crime and probation department involvement for those youth directly served by BEST programs. Moreover, the analyses in this report that rely on data from these local justice systems cover shorter periods of time than the project as a whole in order to avoid error due to inconsistency in data systems. This noticeably reduced the sample size for both citywide and client-specific outcome analyses, which reduces the generalizability of these findings.

In addition to these more general limitations, there are methodological limitations specific to different outcome analyses. In particular, it is important to note that neither of the analyses examining BEST service delivery in relation to neighborhood crime outcomes or client-level delinquency outcomes is able to control for external factors that may also affect the outcomes of interest. In the examination of crime trends across San Jose neighborhoods over the course of best service delivery, this analysis does not control for other factors that could affect neighborhood crime rates, such as changes in neighborhood demographics or socioeconomic status. Although the analysis does control for changes in overall and youth population density, it is nonetheless important to note that there are other possible causal factors for the change in crime trends that are not examined here. Similarly, it is important to note that the



analyses of BEST client outcomes are unable to statistically isolate BEST service delivery as a causal factor by comparing BEST clients to comparable youth who did not engage in BEST services. Instead, these analyses examine the outcomes of the same youth before and after their participation in BEST services. Moreover, as discussed above, a small sample size limited our ability to control for other relevant factors such as demographics and prior justice system contact.

The Evolution of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force

The following section outlines the major milestones in the development and implementation of the Task Force. These benchmark events played an important role in the structure and success of the Task Force's evolution. The following narrative is built from several data sources, including an assessment and analysis of historical data, including the MGTPF's Strategic Work Plans, BEST Program RFQ Funding Applications, as well as archival data on MGPTF activities. This sources are complemented by data from key informant interviews with current and former Task Force member and reviews of best practices related to violence prevention and intervention, juvenile delinquency, and youth service delivery. (See Methodology for a more detailed methodological appendix).

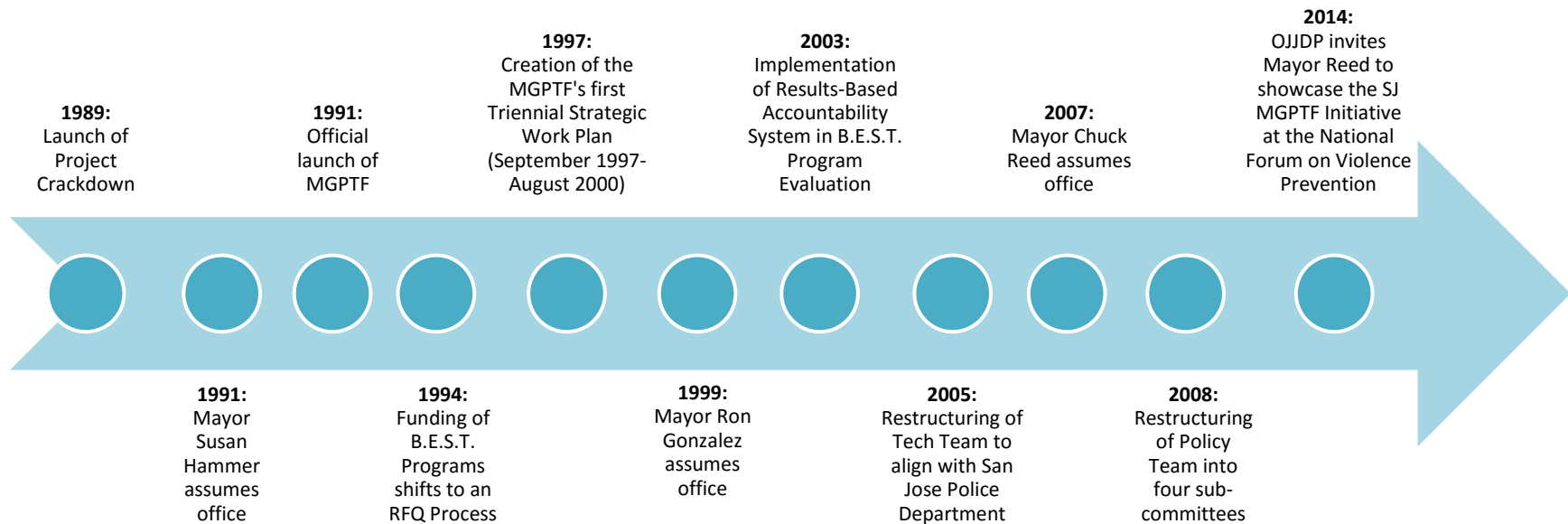
Taking the First Steps

Project Crackdown

In these three years, PACT has reached out to over 8,000 families. We've heard optimism and determination. We've also heard frustration, pain, anger and fear. At one elementary school, the students have arrived at school twice to find a dead child—killed by gang violence. At another, children cannot get to and from school without passing by open drug dealing on their streets...

People Acting in Community Together (PACT) delivered the above excerpt to San José's City Council, seeking the Mayor's commitment to address the dramatic rise in drugs and crime-related activity throughout the city. As a community advocacy group, at the time PACT was an affiliation of 13 churches and community organizations, representing 25,000 families in the City. PACT's call to action was highly effective. In 1988, Mayor McEnery, the City Council, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and California State legislators all responded to a series of meetings that involved over 1,500 PACT stakeholders to adopt a Comprehensive Drug Policy with broad objectives to address the drug epidemic. The following year, in 1989, Mayor McEnery officially launched Project Crackdown, a million-dollar neighborhood approach to fight the epidemic. At the time, Project Crackdown was the most comprehensive program, using principles of community partnership and development, neighborhood empowerment, and interagency coordination among a broad range of social services.

Figure 4: Key Milestones in MGPTF Development and Implementation



Convening the Task Force

In 1991, San José's new Mayor, Susan Hammer, expanded upon Project Crackdown by formally establishing the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF). While Crackdown's primary focus was on combating the drug epidemic, the newly created Task Force also set out to address San José's pervasive gang problem.⁸ In a response letter to PACT, Mayor Hammer demonstrated her commitment to reducing gang activity. She wrote: "[The MGPTF's] goal will be to design ways to prevent young people from joining gangs and to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in controlling criminal behavior by gangs."

Mayor Hammer and her administration developed two key institutional bodies to lead and implement the MGPTF: the Policy Team and the Technical Team. As the decision-making body, the Policy Team was responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction to the MGPTF. The Policy Team included a number of key stakeholders, including the Mayor, City Manager, Chief of Police, Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, as well as leaders from County agencies including the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Probation Department; and several community representatives.⁹ This group was intentionally broad and uniquely diverse for a decision-making body, reflecting Mayor Hammer's desire to engage the community from the outset. For example, as a key informant reported, the Mayor asked Pastor Tony Ortiz, founder of Breakout Prison Outreach, to join the group because of his knowledge of San José's gang dynamics at that time.

The second body, the Technical Team (referred to as "Tech") was designed to represent the community through a number of CBO leaders who collaborated with law enforcement and other citywide programs. Members of the Tech Team were tasked with the implementation of services and programs funded through BEST program, as well as day-to-day prevention and Intervention efforts.

As early as 1992, Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) were created between the MGPTF and each BEST grantee. Each MOU required that each funding agency identify representatives to attend the Policy Team and the Tech Team. However, as one key informant recalls, even before this requirement was established, many interested agencies sent their representatives to the Tech Team meetings. Task Force participants observed that these representatives came to the table without the expectation of funding. Rather, they were excited to be a part of the initiative and to have a say in the undertaking.

The original structure was brilliant. The structure has the right players there. The original group of people believed in it strongly and as their replacements came in, they mentored their replacements, and it continued with the level of importance that the MGPTF has. (Superintendent Porter)

The Task Force Policy and Tech Teams serve as a bifurcated steering committee, representing both agency directors and line staff. According to current and former participants, this structure serves as an asset of the MGPTF because it has allowed for an effective balance of information sharing and decision-making.

⁸ A January 1991 memo issued by the Deputy City Manager indicated that the number of gang members in San Jose totaled 2,000. Additionally, 870 gang-related crimes were reported during 1990.

⁹ The membership of both the Policy and Tech teams has shifted overtime, discussed in detail below.

One of the strengths of having the directors of each agency or organization at the Policy Team meetings was the ability for each entity's representative to make on-the-spot decisions without further delay of approval. Several informants noted the Policy Team's decision-making power was critical to the MGPTF's efficacy. Moreover, this allowed the Policy Team to respond smoothly and effectively during moments of crisis in the community.

Among the major strengths of the Task Force is its consistent involvement of stakeholders in key decision-making processes. Members of the Policy and "Tech" Teams brought their diverse perspectives from the various community sectors they represented (e.g., law enforcement, education, social services) to the table where they were able to examine the gang problem from a variety of perspectives to arrive at carefully informed decisions. Representatives would then take the decisions back to their agency or organization. According to key informants, MGPTF representatives used this reporting process to promote consensus within their organizations. As the quote below indicates, the MGPTF's organizational structure was set up to facilitate ease in information sharing and decision-making:

There were regularly scheduled Policy Team meetings; there were weekly or bi-weekly Tech Team meetings. Three or four individuals from each agency would meet and talk about ongoing issues, deployment, contracts, progress, status, trainings, and so on. The Tech Team representative from my agency would come back and report to me and we'd talk about what we needed to do at our agency. And I would go to the Policy Team, and receive a wide variety of information there. (Michael Pritchard)

At the same time, respondents from both Policy and Tech Teams noted that input from the Tech Team was equally invaluable because members provided critical information regarding gang-related issues within the community as well as what kinds of services were needed to address the problem.

A Community-Wide Problem

One of first major Task Force milestones was defining the gang problem as a community-wide issue, which required an entirely new way of conceiving and approaching the problem. It required a careful look at how gang-related activities were distributed across the city as well as understanding the complex social and economic factors that shape gang dynamics in San José. Under Mayor Hammer's direction, the Task Force began to tackle the problem as a *youth services issue*. As noted by a number of early MGPTF members, this was successful in achieving stakeholder buy-in since it avoided positioning any one sector as responsible for the problem and its resolution. Instead, it elicited the assistance and commitment of a wide array of agencies and service providers, and enabled a paradigm shift from the gang issue being "not our problem" to a community problem.

Mayor Hammer stepped up and told everyone at a press conference that she was going to form a task force because the streets belong to the residents of San José. We were taking back our streets." (Mario Maciel)

The following programs are examples of the kind of interagency partnerships conceived during Mayor Hammer's tenure:



- ❖ **Clean Slate Tattoo Removal Program.** Initiated in April 1994, the program assists youth who were formerly gang-involved and/or at risk in removing tattoos that may pose a barrier to pursuing healthy alternatives to anti-social behavior through education and/or employment.
- ❖ **Safe School Campus Initiative (SSCI).** This project began in early 1994, and was a partnership with the City of San José and East Side Union High School District to develop a process for preventing and deescalating violence on and around school campuses. Now, SSCI is at all high schools, middle schools and community schools throughout San José.
- ❖ **Striving Towards Achievement with New Direction (STAND).** Originally started as the Girls and Young Women's Program, in 1999 it became STAND, to provide access to resources and personal development opportunities for young women and their families to enhance their resiliency skills, focus on identifying the root cause of issues, and address some of the high risk behaviors exhibited.

Additionally, given the community's central role from its inception, the initiative emphasized a community policing approach to gang prevention and intervention. The Task Force presented the gang problem to residents as one that the city was unequipped to address without community support. According to stakeholders, this empowered agencies and CBOs to have a sense of ownership of the initiative from the very beginning.

The Task Force subsequently followed the re-framing of the issue with what one stakeholder referred to as "progressive funding strategies" (Norberto Duenas), which provided tools and resources to launch the community-wide effort. The other benefit of defining the problem as community-wide was a funding allocation plan that included citywide services as well as district-specific services that increased the City's chances of securing the support of other council members. This way it was not seen as just an issue for those council districts where the majority of violence occurred. Task Force leadership made a point to meet annually with council members to discuss issues impacting their districts.

Establishing an Infrastructure

As Task Force members began envisioning how their work would unfold, they sought guidance from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). OJJDP-funded research on community-based violence prevention initiatives indicates that an initiative's assessment and planning stage is crucial to effective implementation. Moreover, the planning processes' most successful initiatives hinge on the role of the steering committee which, research shows, should be familiar with the types of violence, locations, patterns of change, citizens' concerns, community perceptions, and changes in the community's social demographics at the beginning of the planning process. This data should then inform the development of strategic goals.¹⁰

¹⁰ Communities That Care® Prevention Strategies Guide, available at <http://www.cimh.org/contentFiles/CCPSG%20-%20Programs%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>.

To obtain all of this information, OJJDP-funded research shows that conducting a comprehensive needs assessment is essential. A community assessment helps develop a foundational starting point by determining the specific needs and gaps in services and refining the target population(s) in order to better allocate funds and capitalize on the community's existing resources.

Developing a Strategic Plan

Consistent with these best practices, the MGPTF's formative years focused on establishing an official infrastructure for the Task Force as well as building public awareness. One of the earliest MGPTF executive summaries documents the following goals and objectives:

- ❖ Increase the awareness in the City of San José and in Santa Clara County regarding the problems of at-risk youth.
- ❖ Establish an interagency community-wide framework that includes schools, the City of San José, Santa Clara County, and community-based agencies, in order to better serve at-risk youth.
- ❖ Increase accountability and coordination by local government agencies, businesses, and community-based service agencies in their efforts to reduce gang membership.
- ❖ Prevent gang-related crime and improve the ability of law enforcement agencies to curtail gang activity in the City of San José.

To achieve these objectives, the Task Force developed a multi-pronged approach, outlining a citywide vision and scope that simultaneously called for neighborhood-based program and service implementation. This ensured the engagement of stakeholders at all levels, including higher-level staff as well as residents. For instance, two of the identified citywide strategies included: (1) Empower and involve members of the general community and (2) Continue the involvement of Mayor Hammer's office in the implementation of the anti-gang model.

At the neighborhood level, strategies included the creation of the following positions within the community: (1) A Gang Program Coordinator, based at a local high school, who would be responsible for overall coordination of service provision for at-risk youth and active gang members and (2) Family Support Workers (FSWs) who would be assigned to work with the families of at-risk youth in the elementary and middle schools within the targeted area. The range of services provided by the FSWs spanned from service brokerage through crisis intervention.

Interviews with key informants indicated that one method developed under the "Project Crackdown" model that the Task Force used to maintain focus on the larger goals of the strategic plan was establishing short-term 30/60/90 day work plans to respond to shifts in community needs. According to these informants, the development of these short-term plans, combined with the commitment among Task Force members to monitor progress and hold each other accountable, enabled the Task Force to bridge the gap between longer-term strategic plans and ongoing changes to service needs.

During Mayor Hammer's tenure, the MGPTF issued executive summaries, in which it identified "strategic directions". These summaries were updated annually. However, by the late 1990s stakeholders realized that the MGPTF could benefit from the development of a formal strategic plan. Toward the end of Mayor

Hammer's tenure, when the Task Force was more established, the MGPTF moved toward a triennial strategic work plan.

The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force Strategic Work Plan, active September 1997 through August 2000, was the first triennial strategic plan. Its overall aim continued the efforts of the previous years, seeking to reduce gang violence and recruitment activity, promote community mobilization in gang prevention activities, and build interagency collaborative youth programs and services.

Under the leadership of Mayor Hammer's successor, Mayor Ron Gonzalez, the MGPTF issued its second Strategic Work Plan, titled "Reclaiming Our Youth." A review of the 2002–2005 Strategic Work Plan showed that the MGPTF highlighted the strengthening of school-based initiatives and partnerships. For instance, one of the goals was to expand the Safe School Campus Initiative started under Mayor Hammer to all San José middle schools by 2003.

In addition to strengthening school-based safety initiatives and fostering youth educational support, a second focus was the MGPTF's capacity building. During 2002–2005 Strategic Work Plan implementation, the Task Force identified several action items that would expand the MGPTF's capacity. Such activities included creating and publicizing a MGPTF website that included a description of the Task Force, developing an online agency database that included agency contact and referral information, and excerpts of the San José BEST Evaluation Report. The Task Force also set out to design and implement a three-year, results-based performance evaluation system of BEST programs and develop a series of informational presentations to school districts and school sites regarding the MGPTF's services and San José BEST by 2005.

A primary difference between the first and second strategic work plan was the adoption of a strength-based youth asset development model (see "Continuum of Care Model of Service Provision" below for more details). More specifically, the focus shifted toward strengthening social connectedness in youth's primary social environments—family, school and community—with the aim of creating an overall positive social "safety net."

The following were the MGPTF's Strategic Objectives for 2002–2005:

- ❖ **Youth and Family Development.** Promote and strengthen the skills and competency of youth professionals and families to better support the overall healthy development of children and youth.
- ❖ **Student Education Support.** Strengthen and formalize partnerships among the City of San José, San José schools and community-based organizations (CBOs) to increase targeted student performance through student support services that include, but are not limited to truancy prevention and intervention, and educational assistance activities.
- ❖ **Youth Intervention.** Provide high-risk and gang-involved youth access to effective intervention services that will reduce risk behaviors and build new personal and social life skills.
- ❖ **School and Community Safety.** Make San José schools the safest urban schools in America. Continue collective efforts by law enforcement, school districts, City safety programs, and

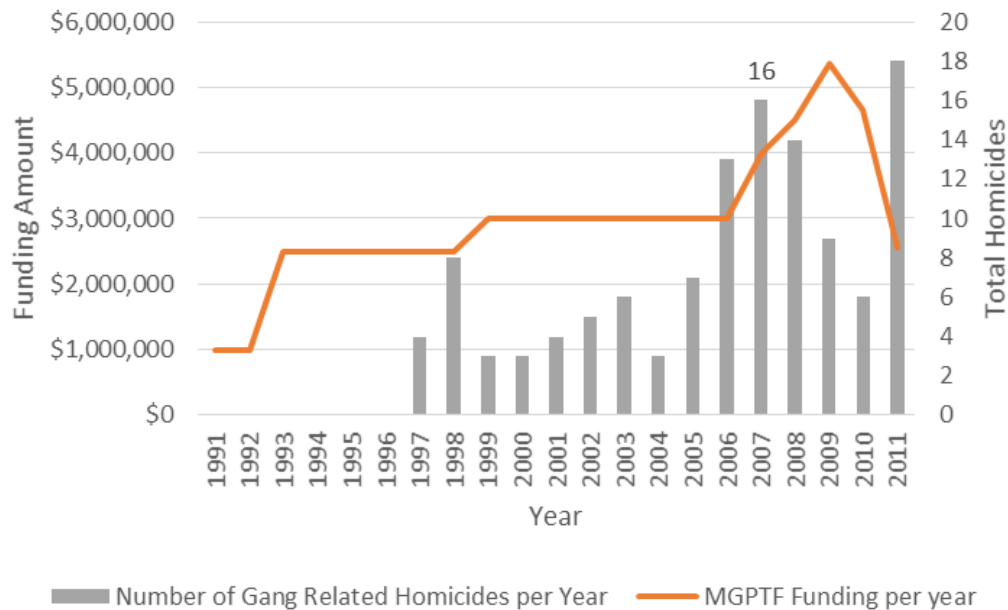
community-based organizations to ensure that children and families feel safe at school and in their communities.

- ❖ **Capacity Building.** Develop a resource development plan that will increase funding to the MGPTF/SJ BEST service agencies, by maximizing opportunities to leverage outside funding, form new service partnerships and utilize the BEST Evaluation design to measure outcomes and promote continuous improvement in program models.¹¹

In January 2007, Chuck Reed succeeded Mayor Ron Gonzalez. Mayor Reed assumed office during a particularly difficult time for the City. In addition to drastic budget cuts, the City experienced a surge in gang-related violence. Data from the San José Police Department indicates that both the total number and percentage of homicides that were gang-related in 2007 reached the highest recorded level since 1998.¹²

Figure 5: indicates the MGPTF's annual funding from 1991 through 2011, relative to the total number of gang-related homicides. While funding stayed relatively stable between 1999 and 2006, Mayor Reed managed to procure an additional \$1-million in funding, bringing the MGPTF funding to a total of \$4 million in 2007. This same year had one of the highest number of gang-related homicides throughout the MGPTF's history ($n=16$).

Figure 5: San José MGPTF's annual funding and total number of homicides per year, 1991-2011



Soon after Mayor Reed took office, the MGPTF issued a new strategic work plan. The 2008–2011 Work Plan was renamed: “Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT): A plan to break the cycle of youth

¹¹ MGPTF Strategic Work Plan, “Reclaiming Our Youth,” 2002-2005.

¹² MGPTF Strategic Work Plan, 2008-2011. “Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT).”

violence and foster hope.” In addition to continuing to strengthen and expand the Continuum of Care model of service delivery, the Task Force emphasized personal transformation and accountability.¹³

The following were the strategic objectives outlined in the 2008-2011 Strategic Work Plan:

1. Strengthen and expand the “asset-based” service delivery system in executing the MGPTF Continuum of Care.
2. Design and execute an education and awareness campaign that employs culturally competent strategies to inform and engage youth, families, and community partners.
3. Implement a comprehensive capacity building strategy to equip Task Force members, youth, families and neighborhoods with the skills and resources necessary to reduce violence and anti-social behavior.
4. Enhance the Crisis Prevention and Community Response Protocol.
5. Leverage and coordinate the City of San José’s MGPTF Continuum of Care Model with local, state, and national initiatives.

In its push for personal transformation and accountability, The MGPTF recognized the importance of the home environment in addressing violence and fostering pro-social behavior Accordingly, a key component of the Strategic Work Plan was capacity building targeted towards youth, families, and neighborhoods as well as MGPTF Technical Team members. To accomplish this goal, the plan called for developing and implementing several training institutes and workshops, including:

- ❖ Gang Intervention Training Institute
- ❖ Parent Awareness Training Institute
- ❖ Community summit through the Policy Team Community Engagement sub-committee
- ❖ A youth component with the goal of enhancing youth resiliency and teaching practical skills
- ❖ Parent training workshops in strategic locations
- ❖ Early Prevention and Intervention Workshops

Both the Parent Awareness Training Institute and youth resiliency workshop were pilot programs. Overall, the 2008–2011 Work Plan issued forth an expansion in prevention and intervention strategies begun during the prior Strategic Work Plan. Both plans made capacity building a priority. While the 2002–2005 Work Plan focused on building the capacity of the BEST programmatic structure (i.e., implementation of a results-based accountability, mapping “hotspots” to better match services with need), the 2008–2011 Work Plan turned toward building the capacity of youth and their families through various trainings and educational workshops.

The MGPTF developed a new strategic work plan for 2011–2013. This most recent Strategic Plan expands upon the five strategic objectives outlined in the 2008–2011 Strategic Work Plan, adding two other objectives in response to California’s current political climate around criminal justice, particularly around the re-entry process. The sixth objective is to partner with, coordinate with, and support the County led

¹³ Ibid.

re-entry model. The seventh is to forge a public/private sector partnership in order to make the MGPTF sustainable and a steady funding source.¹⁴

Strategic Goals 6 and 7 also reflect the MGPTF's push toward fostering collaboration, not only across departments and agencies, but also across the public and private sector. The goal is to ensure youth are exposed at an early age and provided opportunities for mentorship, internships, and workforce development.

As this section demonstrates, the Task Force worked to maintain a meaningful and current strategic plan through constant monitoring and reporting throughout the year with assistance from community partners. As a result, the MGPTF and its stakeholders felt the Task Force was able to better respond to emerging trends and community needs.

Defining and Identifying Target Populations

Many successful initiatives focus their planning efforts on identifying a target population. OJJDP redefined "prevention" to include identifying targeted populations as a prevention strategy for achieving desired outcomes over other more generalized prevention strategies because well-defined target populations was seen as more effective with gang prevention efforts. Defining a target population provides important guidance in selecting programming and services for the initiative. Target populations may be defined in a number of ways. A target population may be an age group, such as youth under 18; it may be focused on gender, in which case gender-specific programming is implemented; it may be geographically limited, such as individuals residing within a particular neighborhood. Most commonly, successful youth and gang violence initiatives define their target populations by risk level.¹⁵ Defining an initiative's target population by risk level can be particularly effective for determining service types and strategies, discussed in more detail below. Risk levels may include categories such as gang-impacted individuals, delinquent individuals, gang supporters, gang members, or "hard core" gang members.¹⁶

The Task Force leadership made intentional efforts to align their strategy with OJJDP best practices, taking a variety of considerations into account as they identified and defined their target populations. Using information gathered from gang prevention research, the Task Force compiled a list of characteristics associated with gang-affiliated and gang-impacted individuals. At that time, the probation and police departments were using gang enhancement measures when sentencing gang-involved individuals. As a result, and to avoid creating problems for potential clients of initiative-driven services, the Task Force decided to define its target populations around behaviors rather than gang membership or involvement.

In addition, the Task Force expanded its classification to four risk levels:

1. **At risk:** Youth residing in a high-risk community (hotspot areas, low socioeconomic areas).

¹⁴ MGPTF Strategic Work Plan, 2011-2013. "Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT)."

¹⁵ Communities That Care® Prevention Strategies Guide, available at <http://www.cimh.org/contentFiles/CCPSG%20-%20Programs%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>

¹⁶ MGPTF Strategic Work Plan, 2008-2011. "Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT)."

2. **High risk:** Youth distinguished by the level of intensity at which the youth adopts gang lifestyle characteristics.
3. **Gang-impacted:** Youth exhibiting high-risk behaviors related to gang lifestyles.
4. **Gang-intentional:** Youth explicitly identified and/or arrested for gang-related incidents or acts of gang violence through the justice department.¹⁷

The expansion in risk categories reflects the MGPTF's refinement in strategic direction over the years. In other words, the inclusion of "at-risk," "high risk," and "gang-impacted" reflects the Task Force's progressive emphasis on prevention and intervention services and reduction in suppression-centric practices.

Community Input

From MGPTF's inception, the City perceived itself as a partner with the community. As such, the Task Force emphasized community engagement from the start, and community input has always been a central facet of the strategic planning process. Community outreach efforts began as early as the first meetings to discuss the gang issue, through inviting community representatives to join the discussions. Relying in part on the community organization groundwork laid by Task Force predecessor Project Crackdown, community leadership figures from impacted neighborhoods were quickly incorporated into the Task Force infrastructure. The Task Force began the initiative with the difficult process of convincing community members that they would have a real say in the initiative's development.

A major key to our success was making the community part of the planning, part of the solution. The reason a lot of our programs were failing at the onset was that we were [telling them] we've done these studies, we know what you need, take your medicine. People didn't show up for that. (Albert Balagso)

The best practices literature describes community mobilization as the involvement of local citizens in an initiative, including former gang-involved youth, community groups, and government agencies. When violence prevention initiatives engage in community mobilization early on in the process, the efforts are markedly more successful. The most effective community mobilization efforts begin with outreach to the community. Outreach efforts ensure that the initiative is supported and sustained from the very start by the criminal and juvenile justice system, schools, community based organizations, local government agencies, and the community as a whole.¹⁸

Community Engagement

Because of the Task Force's early dedication to community involvement, outreach strategies to engage a wide array of community stakeholders were of paramount importance. Ongoing outreach efforts to the community took the form of coordination with existing neighborhood services, gang awareness

¹⁷ MGPTF's BEST Funding Cycles XXIII-XXV, General Information and Requirements, 2013-2016

¹⁸ OJJDP. (2010, October 1). Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems: OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model. Retrieved May 2, 2014, from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231200.pdf>

presentations at homeowner and neighborhood meetings, meetings with residents of impacted neighborhoods, presentations in schools, knock-and-talks prior to any large event to encourage attendance, and community events such as barbecues. Task Force partners sought to be sensitive to the diversity of the community through printing all informational materials in the major languages of the population.

As part of the planning process, MGPTF staff reached out to the community and conducted a listening tour. During this process, the department sent staff who reflected the City's different communities to increase the likelihood that they would form a positive rapport with the community, build goodwill about the future program, and obtain accurate and candid information about community needs.¹⁹

As time progressed and the MGPTF became more established, the Task Force actively sought community feedback in the development of each strategic plan through an extensive community planning process. Ensuring that its strategic plans were regularly informed by stakeholder input has been a long-standing Task Force priority. Key informant interviews and documentary data indicate its community planning process is perceived as largely successful because it has allowed the Task Force to continually improve and adapt its objectives and services to the needs of the community.

The Task Force members sought to include community members in decision-making processes in order to ensure that the initiative was serving the community's needs. Task Force leadership facilitated annual neighborhood needs assessment meetings the first five years in high impact areas of the city. These needs assessment meetings informed the allocation of services and funding to support needs identified through that process. The meetings were held in neighborhood schools and other neighborhood locations. They were conducted in multiple small groups organized by language. Community members were asked specifically to identify gang issues, community needs, and suggestions for service provision. The information gathered at these neighborhood assessment meetings directly informed the resource allocations for those areas. Because the assessments were held annually for the first five years, residents were able to hold the Task Force accountable for commitments made during prior year. After the fifth year, the Task Force became more institutionalized, and the needs assessment meetings occurred every other year.

The Policy and Tech Teams both included community representatives and leaders of CBO and were structured to facilitate community engagement. The Policy Team also featured a community engagement sub-committee dedicated to the pursuit of ongoing community mobilization. Task Force meetings were advertised widely and community representatives were encouraged to attend these meetings to provide feedback on service provision and the changing service needs of their neighborhoods, and to make suggestions about solutions. Input from the community representatives were consistently integrated into strategic plans, funding allocation plans, the initiative's definition of success, and the initiative's guiding principles.

¹⁹ The California Cities Gang Prevention Network, Bulletin 15, August 2009.
(<http://www.ccgpn.org/Publications/CA%20Cities%20Bulletin%2015.pdf>)

Interagency Collaboration and Relationship Building

Another practice that contributed to the Task Force's success was breaking down silos and creating a culture of collaboration. Best practices suggest greatest initiative success when there is a high degree of collaboration among participating agencies, organizations, and community representatives. This is frequently achieved when agencies and organizations cooperate with one another in developing and implementing the initiative, assist one another with achieving their respective objectives, and share ownership and responsibility for the programs.

There are all these organizations, and there's these intra- and inter-relationships, where each has their own goals, and when you meld it all together there's this safety net that's created. The Task Force becomes the convener. Agencies bring different things to the table, and what evolves is this mish-mash that has all these resources. It's organic and messy. (Angel Rios)

One of the critical innovations of the MGPTF was the early realization that meaningful collaboration needed to be both formalized—through infrastructure—and also informal—through relationships. The bifurcated Policy Team/Tech Team steering committee structure naturally lent itself to collaboration by involving a wide array of community and governmental representatives. As one longtime participant notes, “the committee and subcommittee structure really helps. It galvanizes participation beyond just a group that convenes monthly, and gives people hands-on roles” (Mario Maciel). Moreover, as the MGPTF progressed over the years, additional stakeholders were added, including representatives from Santa Clara County's Social Services and Mental Health Departments, school districts, community-based organizations, a City Council member, and the County Board of Supervisors.

By ensuring that a wide range of leaders and stakeholders were at the table and publicly invested in a common issue, the Task Force created a context within which it was hard for partners not to agree to support each other. As interviews with key informants indicated, one of the greatest challenges the Task Force faced was concerns around data confidentiality between participating agencies and organizations. To overcome this challenge, the Task Force formalized relationships with partnering agencies and services providers through MOUs and MOAs. These agreements required confidentiality on certain types of shared information, which promoted trust and allowed for greater information sharing. In part due to these formalized methods of relationship building, representative roles have passed down through institutional memory and knowledge, and have stayed relatively consistent over time.

At the same time, a strong element of socialization among Task Force stakeholders has been nurtured throughout the MGPT's life course. Cognizant of the need to build trust between partners from across diverse departments, backgrounds, and experiences, the Task Force hosted annual retreats that allowed Task Force members to get to know each other while working together to address common challenges. These retreats also offered social opportunities that facilitated relationship building not only between entities, but also between individuals. Many Task Force members suggested that much of the real work occurred not during work hours, but after meetings concluded and/or at social gatherings, such as barbecues, and other informal events. In addition, the annual Policy and Tech Team retreats and other regular Task Force gatherings provided opportunities for staff from community-based organizations, the

City and Police Department to build individual rapport and dialogue in a more relaxed atmosphere. These individual relationships, in turn, promoted interagency trust, and put known faces on the contacts for referrals and shared resources.

It's those relationships. The number of relationships, the number of people I've gotten to know, and then the number of connections, opportunities, shared pieces of information, offered support; it's phenomenal. I've done a lot of work in other things, but it's that networking, knowing who you can go to ask questions. (Jeff Bornfeld)

One thing that sustains our model is reinvigorating new relationships intentionally. You can just brief someone once and believe the partnership will last forever. We are constantly building our relationships – breaking bread, making one-on-one invitations, showcasing points of intersection and common objectives. We are being intentional and seeking time with major partners. Mandated partnerships get you so far – we have made quantum leaps forward based on mutual agenda, but also a true respect for and liking of each other is critical. (Mario Maciel)

Over time, as the MGPTF gained more focus and continued to refine its strategic direction, interagency relationships solidified. Because everyone involved shared the common commitments to reduce gang-related violence and to create a safe and healthy environment for the City's youth, strong partnerships emerged that enabled the joint leveraging of shared resources.

I know that all of the people that work for the Task Force have a "no-giving-up" attitude. We all know we can't eliminate gang crime in San José, but we all feel that if we can just prevent one homicide, one assault, then we've achieved something at least. (Lt. Derek Chen)

As trust between agencies and organizations solidified, the dialogue at meetings became more open and productive. The flexibility of this ongoing dialogue further empowered the Task Force to determine where gaps and overlaps existed, which in turn allowed the MGPTF to quickly adapt to changing community needs.

Key Stakeholders

Data collected from key informant interviews indicate that several partnerships with specific stakeholder groups were particularly crucial to the success of the Task Force.

The involvement of the San José school districts in the Task Force partnership has been an essential component of successful collaboration. The initial challenge of reframing the gang issue from being nobody's problem to being a community-wide problem enabled the schools to become more engaged in the partnership without risking recrimination for school failures. Additionally, building trust with school staff and leadership facilitated essential information sharing and coordination between issues on campuses and in the neighborhoods.

Additionally, law enforcement has and continues to play a significant role in the effective functioning of the Task Force. Law enforcement partners participated throughout a variety of efforts, particularly in



efforts to move beyond practices that traditionally define law enforcement, such as suppression, prevention, and intervention activities. Chief Rob Davis provided strong leadership, stating in an interview, “We can’t arrest our way out of this.” Moreover, coordination between the Probation Department, the Police Department, and the District Attorney’s Office helped to diffuse and de-escalate situations so that community organizations could provide resources to impacted individuals and neighborhoods. Early Task Force representatives included specific police units such as the gang intervention unit and the community outreach unit. When the Task Force sought to expand coordination and collaboration with law enforcement, invitations were extended to the department of corrections, state parole, juvenile detention facilities, and probation and parole officers.

Another key piece for us was involving the Probation Department, Juvenile Probation, the District Attorney, school administrators, and district offices. We looked at what was happening in the streets, what the Police Department was seeing, and tried to do early identification of conflicts and violence, and then tried to prevent it through intervention. (Arturo Catbagan)

Bridging the Gap between Community and Law Enforcement

The Task Force recognized early on that many residents in the communities most impacted by the initiative experienced a lack of trust and confidence in law enforcement. Accordingly, the Task Force engaged in efforts to bridge the gap between its neighborhood and law enforcement partners. These efforts included plain-clothed officers working on neighborhood projects, introducing community members to the 9-1-1 response process, integrating law enforcement into prevention and intervention efforts, coordinating suppression efforts with input from community-based organizations, and promoting direct community relationships through the exchange of names and personal phone numbers.

Furthermore, the decision to house the Task Force initiative under the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), rather than under the police department, was innovative. This decision helped to frame the Task Force as “smart on crime” rather than “tough on crime” and made participation with the initiative more palatable for community partners wary of suppression-driven programs.

According to Esther Mota, Community Services Supervisor of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, a primary reason for the success of the Task Force has been its decision to recruit staff from non-traditional sources to work under PRNS. When hiring staff, Ms. Mota urges cities to keep in mind that communication with at-risk families and youth is a big part of the job. In that vein, it is crucial to hire staff that are able to work well with these communities.²⁰

²⁰ The California Cities Gang Prevention Network, Bulletin 15, August 2009.
<http://www.ccgpn.org/Publications/CA%20Cities%20Bulletin%2015.pdf>

Implementing the Initiative's Goals

Selecting the appropriate types of services to provide was an important step to ensure that the initiative's goals were achieved. Best practices in violence prevention identify four major categories of service provision: prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry.²¹ During the time of Project Crackdown, programs were largely geared toward neighborhood organizing and suppression. However, very quickly, under Mayor Hammer, and as the MGPTF increasingly formalized its structure and refined its strategic objectives, the service model shifted toward prevention and intervention efforts. For instance, a 1997 Strategic Planning Committee memo recommends "75% of funding must be allocated to prevention, intervention and employment, [while] 25% can be allocated to suppression services."

San José Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST)

A key component of the Task Force is San José's BEST Program, the service-funding arm of the MGPTF, created in 1992. In a response letter to PACT, Mayor Hammer wrote:

Beginning next year, the City will initiate San José BEST, a program designed to use redevelopment dollars to provide services to youth in our school districts. San José BEST will provide funds for programs to curb drug abuse and gang activity, for after school activities, and for greater educational opportunities.

From 1991 through 1993, funding for the BEST Program was \$1-million. Since 1994, funding has steadily increased to \$3-million/year, reaching its peak in 2009 at \$5-million. Although funding decreased between 2010 and 2013 due to budgetary constraints. The funding has since been restored.

The BEST Eligible Service Funding Model

When the Task Force began, gang prevention funding was primarily distributed to city agency partners. For instance, MGPTF records from 1992 indicate some of the granting agencies included Santa Clara Social Services Agency, Mount Pleasant Elementary School District, and Recreation, Parks, and Community Services. However, an early evaluation of Task Force-related programs and services conducted by Community Crime Prevention Associates (CCPA) showed that funding recommendations were inconsistent with what the evaluation demonstrated to be the most effective programs and services.

In 1994, only three years after its establishment, the MGPTF decided that funding for BEST programs shift from a Request for Proposal (RFP) Application Process to a Request for Qualification (RFQ) Application Process. Under the eligible service model, the Task Force moved from funding the agencies themselves to funding the services provided. This was a major innovation in MGPTF implementation informed by OJJDP research and other State efforts. The shift from the RFP to the RFQ funding process enabled the Task Force to provide more appropriate services for the community's needs.

Though service providers were re-qualified every three years in cycle with the MGPTF's strategic work plan, funding contracts were evaluated and renewed on an annual basis. The 1994–1995 BEST funding cycle marked critical changes, such as:

²¹ *Ibid.*

- ❖ Shifting direct services for at-risk and high-risk youth to specifically address service gaps indicated in the MGPTF Work Plan
- ❖ Relocating BEST from the City Manager's Office to the City's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services (PRNS)
- ❖ Developing Funding Allocation Plans to coincide with the MGPTF's Work Plan in order to more effectively target city-wide services

To identify the list of eligible services, the MGPTF looked to a range of data sources, including an extensive community needs assessment, demographic data related to the BEST target populations (e.g., crime data and school reports), and data from the annual evaluation of BEST service providers. In the spirit of partnership, Tech Team staff were required to participate in the finalization of Eligible Services. The Task Force successfully maintained stakeholder engagement throughout funding decisions by continuing to invite the community's input for funding-related decision making.

Through Tech Team retreats and ongoing community outreach efforts, stakeholders shared community news, gang issues, hot spots, and service needs and gaps. Simultaneously, the Policy Team supported changes and ensured services met objectives outlined in the strategic plan. Evaluation of different types of service costs helped explain the decisions to funded agencies and organizations. In addition to facilitating more effective use of resources, this funding model helped to depoliticize funding decisions given it was focused on outcomes and data-driven decision making. The MGPTF was able to inform agencies and CBOs about the considerations informing the funding decisions, and promoted consensus by keeping all stakeholders involved in the decision-making processes.

*Eligible services were helpful because it helped us begin to evaluate the cost associated with those services, and the costs associated with different types of services—for example, substance abuse costs are higher than prevention costs. It made everything make more sense to the agencies—why should we fund this more?
Oh, because it does this. It got everybody on the same page. (Ron Soto)*

In 2002–2003, the MGPTF set out to develop and implement a systematic results-based accountability (RBA) performance model within the evaluation process to support the transition to an eligible service model. As a result, an accountability measuring system was added to the original logic model. Performance-based contracting was implemented to ensure that funded agencies were held accountable for their commitments to service provision. In other words, in addition to monitoring their processes, contractors were also then required to track program outcomes through a series of indicators, such as the number of clients served and level of satisfaction of services. The Task Force was prepared to withhold final payments under the contract until all required performance measures were completed. In addition to performance measure requirements, the Task Force also established participation requirements for funded organizations. Funded organizations were required to designate representatives to participate in Task Force meetings and enter into MOUs or MOAs according to Task Force expectations.

The city put its money where it needed to be. Key to that is continuous evaluation of the programs funded. (Norberto Duenas)



Continuum of Care Model of Service Provision

The Task Force embraced the practice of team-based service provision. In keeping with framing San José's gang issue as a community-wide problem, the city strove to break down departmental and agency silos as well as cultivate a common purpose and effort among public agencies, CBOs, and community representatives. Members of the Task Force urged all partners to break away from traditional ideas that community organizations focused on prevention and intervention, while law enforcement primarily conducted suppression-based activities. While this was a challenge at first, over time, law enforcement participated in prevention and intervention strategies, and community organizations coordinated with the police department in suppression efforts. Meanwhile, Task Force members identified active participation in all three service areas throughout the course of the initiative.

One of the key strategies that made San José stand out is the collaboration between city agencies and the sharing of resources. We're working across silos; we get results. That's the big lesson learned from the Task Force. (Superintendent Porter)

In 1993, the MGPTF adopted a holistic approach to service delivery—prevention, intervention, and suppression. To Task Force, this combination constituted a continuum of services.

Integration of Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Strategies

Research shows prevention services are key to successfully combating gang and violence issues; effective prevention strategies are: (1) directly connected to problems identified in assessment and planning process, (2) informed through ongoing initiative-wide data collection activities, and (3) modified to reflect an evolving understanding of the problems in the community.²²

Intervention services focus on “reaching out” to gang- and violence-involved youth and their families, in order to engage them with needed services and the community itself. Best practices in intervention services require involving a wide array of youth-serving agencies, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, police, and other juvenile/criminal justice organizations. Mental health services appropriate for gang-involved youth, a ‘youth intervention approach,’ are often a critical component of intervention service provision.²³

Suppression services are formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved youth by agencies of the juvenile/criminal justice system and by community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups. Successful suppression efforts have been shown to require effective collaboration and data sharing between law enforcement agencies and other partner agencies within the initiative.²⁴

Quickly realizing that the targeted populations required a more complete continuum of services, the Task Force adopted its current prevention/intervention/suppression model. Throughout the history of the Task Force, the focus of services has shifted from prevention to intervention to suppression and back,

²² The California Cities Gang Prevention Network, 2009.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

depending on evolving community needs. Having fully established programming in all three domains has enabled the Task Force to respond to changes in the community in a timely and effective manner. Additionally, as funding declined, the Task Force was able to refocus resources on the areas of highest intervention need.

Over the years, the emphasis on the Task Force strategies changed, given circumstances within the city as far as gang involvement. It's a pendulum swing. Sometimes more prevention is needed, sometimes more heavy suppression. We made those decisions based on the needs of the community over time. (Mark Buller)

Strength-Based Youth Development Framework

Under the leadership of Mayor Ron Gonzales, the MGPTF expanded the continuum of care service delivery model. To strengthen BEST programs, the Task Force refined funding criteria in alignment with the guidelines proposed in the Blueprint for Bridging the Digital Divide, a Youth Services Master Plan created by City staff and partners in 2001.²⁵ The Blueprint endorses a strength-based youth development framework, keeping a “cradle to career” perspective at the fore. It aimed to implement a continuum of individual, family, and community service strategies that promoted youth in all areas of development, including health and well-being, safety, and academic performance, among others. As noted in the BEST Program’s 2004-2007 RFQ Application process, “Developmental planning of model services delivery has shifted from fixing youth’s problems to promoting youth’s strengths.”²⁶

The youth asset development model was foundational to informing subsequent funding cycles and strategic work plans. Mayor Gonzalez and Mayor Reed continued to expand upon the Continuum of Care model through the MGPTF’s extensive evaluation process and staying up to date on best practices in service delivery. For instance, a review of the BEST Program’s RFQ process for 2007-1010 indicates a focus on resiliency, while still working within a youth asset development framework. And in the Strategic Work Plan for 2008-2011, the first strategic objective was to once again, build upon the “asset-based” service delivery system, but with an emphasis on the coordination of youth referrals by members of the MGPTF Task Force.

An analysis of the BEST Program’s Triennial RFQ Application for 2004-2007, 2007-2010, 2010-2013, and 2013-2016 indicates the following trends over the course of the decade:

- ❖ Corresponding with the shift towards personal responsibility and accountability with the 2008-2011 Strategic Work Plan, subsequent funding cycles make an explicit call for eligible services and programs that build on youth’s personal development. For example, while the 2004-2007 RFQ Application identifies eligible services as “Case Management and Youth Support Services,” the 2007-2010 RFQ Application re-prioritizes this as “Personal Development and Youth Support Groups.” Furthermore, the 2010-2013 RFQ Application reframes as “Personal Development Through Cognitive Development and Youth Support Groups.”

²⁵ A Blueprint for Bridging the Digital Divide, 2001.

²⁶ MGPTF’s BEST RFQ 2004-2007 (Cycles XIV-XVI)

- ❖ Similarly, the MGPTF increasingly looks towards eligible services that build youth's life skills and/or overall positive social competencies. For instance, the 2007-2010 RFQ application expands the criteria for domestic violence services to include anger management classes for youth who have a history of assaulting parents and/or significant others. The 2010-2013 RFQ application further promotes youth development of pro-social behavior and support for youth to continue practicing to make healthy choices by looking at services that specifically offer social, recreational, cultural, and community service intervention activities.
- ❖ Each subsequent funding cycle expands the target population and eligible services to include family and friends of youth involved with the gang lifestyle. This includes programs that provide parent education workshops on truancy prevention and intervention as well as programs that help parents to improve the educational home and school environment for the child, learn how the school system functions and help avoid negative influences, and offer support for those parents whose children are at risk of dropping out of school.
- ❖ The most recent funding cycle (2013-2016) is noteworthy for it marks an explicit shift towards connecting service delivery with Evidence-Based practices and programming. As such, the current triennial RFQ Application specifically calls for partnering organizations and/or agencies that either already implement or are willing to increase their organizational capacity to implement Evidence-Based principles, programs and strategies.

“Seamless” Delivery

Another key aspect in moving towards a strength-based framework was a shift in focus from programs to partnerships. The BEST Continuum of Care service delivery model establishes one central point of contact so that families and providers can easily access services, resources, and information. This “seamless” service delivery system connects all local intervention-based initiatives. The aim is that youth will be surrounded with positive influences and strengthened relationships to their families, friends, church, community, school or other pro-social groups.

Despite the shifting focus areas and continual assessment of resource allocation, two efforts are noted as “essential elements” within the Continuum of Care model. These are:

1. The Community Crisis Response Protocol: This is an inter-agency collaborative that activates the SJPD, other city departments, CBOs, social service agencies, and schools to respond to acts of community violence. It has been effective in getting notice to community stakeholders, alerting the Safe School Campus Initiative to deploy intervention teams, and engaging the MGPTF partners to restore “peace” in the community through after-care services.
2. Juvenile Detention Reform (JDR): Create alternatives to detention/incarceration, etc. The evolution of JDR into the Juvenile Justice System Collaborative reflects a renewed effort that is being undertaken to explore, develop, and coordinate alternatives to incarceration for youth offenders.

Summary



When Mayor Hammer originally convened the Task Force, she cast the vision for the initiative. It was this vision that was crucial to the MGPTF's successful launch and sustainability over the decades, paving the way for her successors, Mayor Gonzalez and Mayor Reed, to expand and adapt the Task Force and BEST programs to effectively meet the changing needs of the City.

From its inception and throughout its evolution, several factors have significantly shaped the success of the MGPTF:

- ❖ **The central role of community.** From the original call to action, the City's families and residents have served as a critical partner in addressing the gang problem. The members of the MGPTF recognized residents provided invaluable information and came with their own expertise. As such, the Task Force actively sought their input.
- ❖ **Extensive collaboration and partnership.** In addition to the MGPTF's partnership with the community, the MGPTF exemplified extensive collaboration across agencies. A large factor was the very structure of the Task Force. Bringing together the Directors of the various sectors into one entity – The Policy Team – provided a regular forum for ongoing communication and to tackle the problem from a variety of perspectives. Moreover, the bifurcated model of the complementary Policy and Technical Team ensured stakeholder involvement on multiple levels. At the same time, MGPTF partners recognized from early on that relationships between individuals were at least as important as agreements between institutions. By creating opportunities for MGPTF members to get to know each other as people rather than as institutional representatives, the Task Force helped build trust, which in turn broke down siloes.
- ❖ **Flexibility and adaptability.** A large part of the MGPTF's sustainability over the past twenty-three years has been its ability to stay flexible and adapt to the changing needs of the community as well as broader political and economic landscape. Once again, the synergistic relationship between the Policy and Technical Team greatly contributes to the Task Force's adaptability. That is, through an extensive community engagement process and regular correspondence with the Tech Team, the Policy Team was able to continually refine the MGPTF's Strategic Plan, which in turn informed the funding criteria for BEST eligible service providers. The sum of all these various mechanisms provided a continuous feedback loop that allowed the MGPTF to quickly and efficiently respond to the changing needs of the community.
- ❖ **Data-driven decision making and information sharing.** Transparency in data sharing and data-informed decision making not only ensured all stakeholders were clear on the larger vision and objectives, but also held each participating agency accountable to the Task Force and ultimately, the community. Consistent program evaluation made sure stakeholders' activities continued to align with the strategic objectives. Additionally, the implementation of a results-based accountability (RBA) system in 2002 depoliticized decisions around funding and resource allocation without compromising collaboration and partnership.
- ❖ **Emphasis on continuous learning.** The Task Force has continually tried to stay up-to-date on gang prevention programs through a variety of means. One primary method has been through an

iterative relationship with OJJDP. That is, throughout its history, the MGTPTF has consistently turned to the OJJDP to guide the design of its practices and activities. However, one of the greatest assets of the Task Force was its understanding that there is no standardized protocol for program design and implementation. As such, equally important, was the invaluable expertise provided by the community simply by residents confronting the problem on a daily basis. The families and community advocates had an intimate understanding of each district's social demographics, as well as needs and gaps in services. The Task Force combined this expertise with OJJDP's guidelines to create a successful gang prevention and intervention initiative that was specific to the City of San José. As a result, it has gained national recognition by OJJDP. Most recently, Mayor Chuck Reed was invited by OJJDP to showcase the Initiative at the National Forum on Violence Prevention in Washington D.C.

All of these attributes combine to generate a sustainable initiative that has enjoyed a lasting partnership between city agencies and the community. The most critical factor facilitating San José's ongoing commitment to the Task Force has been the strength of the city's relationships and interagency collaboration. As these relationships are often challenging to document and measure, they are frequently cited as necessary without a true understanding of what their absence can translate to on the ground. Without relationships, there would be no trust, and subsequently little progress toward tackling a gang problem. Each person interviewed for this evaluation described the critical importance of the relationships they have with others connected to the Task Force (e.g., the ability to pick up the phone and locate resources, obtain answers to questions, or generate potential partnerships for new ideas) as invaluable. San José has successfully modeled the principles of collaboration for the purposes of improving public safety and the quality of life for its residents.

Changes in Youth Crime and Gang Involvement over the Course of MGPTF

This section examines the impact of MGPTF on youth crime and gang involvement in San José using three different analyses to examine both citywide outcomes and the outcomes of direct service recipients. The first of these analyses examines the impact of BEST services on rates of youth crime by neighborhood; the second analysis examines citywide changes in youth gang identification; and the third analyzes the direct impact of BEST service receipt on clients' juvenile justice involvement. It is important to note that none of these analyses covers the full timeframe of MGPTF existence; due to a variety of data limitations, discussed in greater detail below, many of the data sources used for these analyses are only available for more recent years of MGPTF activity. Nonetheless, these analyses, taken together, offer compelling evidence of the impact of MGPTF on youth crime and gang involvement in San José over time.

Changes in Youth Crime in BEST Areas

The following section examines the impact of BEST services of youth crime by examining the relationship between service dosage and youth arrest rates by zip code between 2005 and 2015, the years for which client service data is available.

RDA obtained data from the San José Police Department (SJPD) on all arrests from 2005 through 2015 in the City of San José. RDA then used ArcGIS to geocode all of the arrest locations so that arrests could be linked to the zip codes that they occurred within. RDA also obtained BEST youth program service data that indicated the number of youth served within each zip code. Since BEST programs serve youth, RDA examined arrest rates only for individuals under 18 years old. RDA then calculated the arrest rates from 2005 through 2015 for each San José zip code.

As Figure 6 and Figure 7 demonstrate, the City of San José experienced significantly higher youth arrest rates in 2005 compared to 2015. This is particularly true for certain zip codes, especially those close to the downtown part of the City.

Figure 6: Youth Crime Rates, 2005

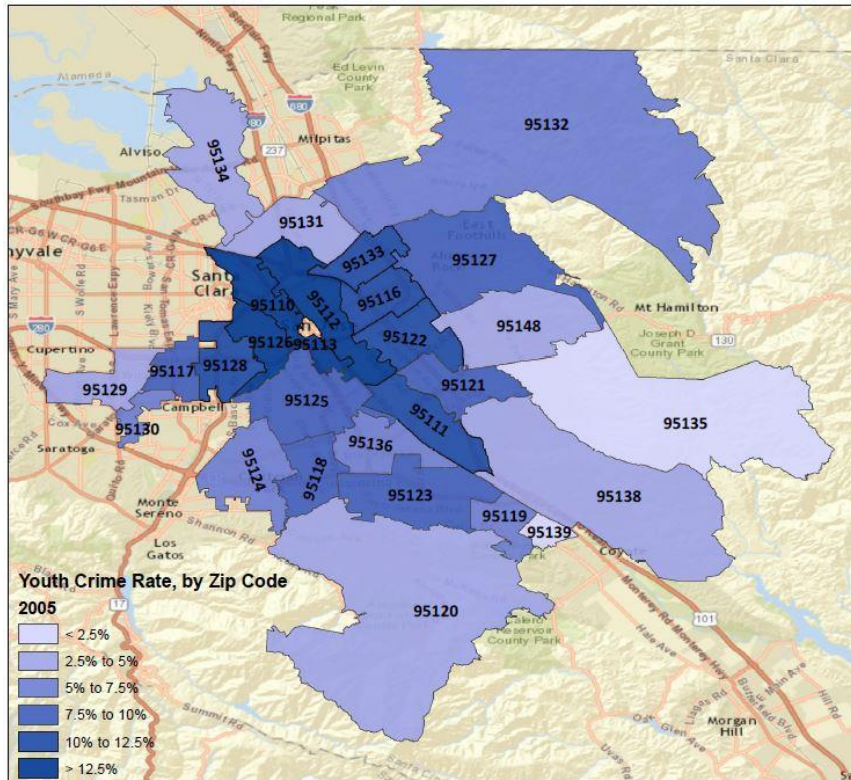
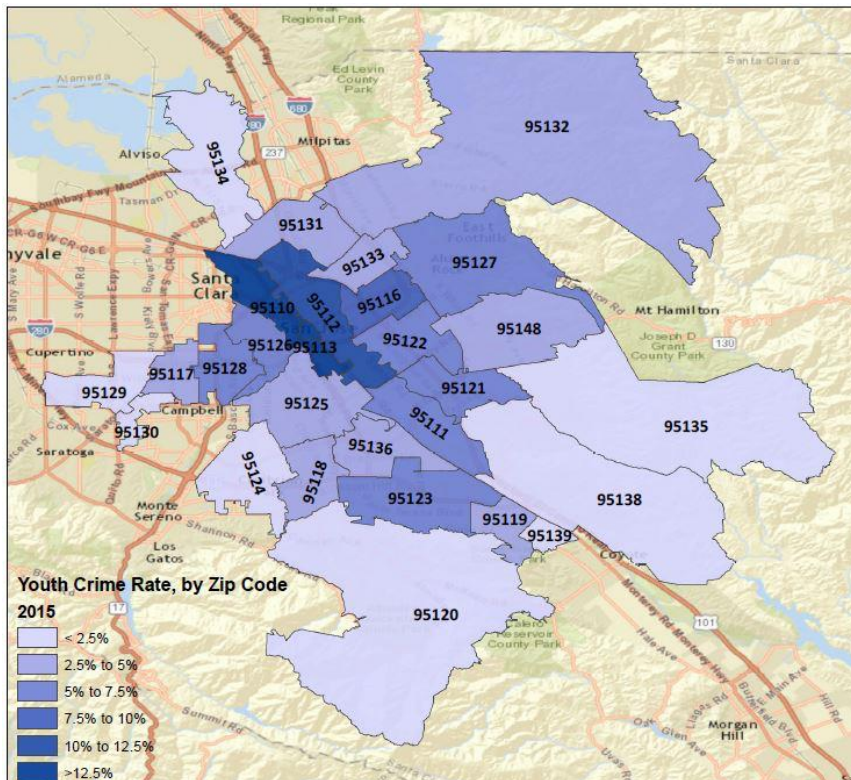


Figure 7: Youth Crime Rates, 2015



To assess whether BEST services had any impact on these changes, RDA examined the correlation between the percentage of youth served in each zip code between 2006 and 2015 and the change in the youth arrest rates and the change in violent crime arrest rates from 2006 through 2015. For this analysis, the violent crime slope is the dependent variable and the independent variable is the percent of youth served in each zip code. RDA conducted this analysis examining the impact of BEST services on youth arrest rates for *all* crimes, as well as on youth arrest rates for *violent incidents*.

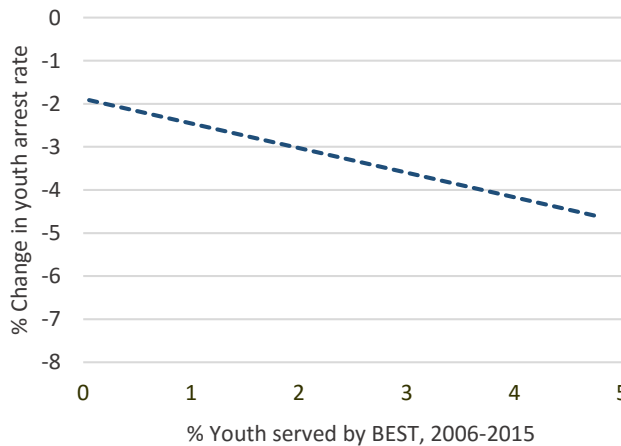
AT A GLANCE...

- ❖ San Jose neighborhoods greater density of BEST services experience greater reductions in youth arrest rates than did neighborhoods in which fewer youth participated in BEST services.
- ❖ This was true when examining arrests for all crime and examining arrests for violent crime.

Reductions in Youth Crime Overall

RDA calculated the percent change in youth arrest rate for all crimes in each San José zip code from 2006 through 2015 and examined the correlation between the youth arrest rate and the percent of youth served in each zip code. The OLS regression model found a strong correlation between the percent of youth served in zip codes and the decline in the youth arrest rate. As Figure 8 below demonstrates, as the percentage of youth served by BEST programs in zip codes increases the arrest rate decreases more dramatically. The regression coefficient of $-.57$ indicates that for each 1% increase in youth served by BEST programs the youth arrest rate decreased by $.57$. This result was statistically significant with a P-value of $.01$. Figure 8 below displays the OLS trend line illustrating the relationship between the youth arrest rate and the percent of youth served in zip codes by BEST programs.

Figure 8: Change in youth arrest rate for all crimes by percent of youth served, 2006-2015



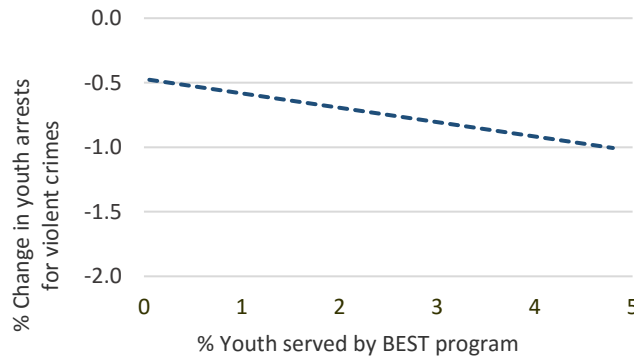
Reductions in Youth Violent Crime

Similar to the analysis discussed above, RDA calculated the percent change in youth arrest rate for violent crimes in each San José zip code from 2006 through 2015 and correlated it with the percentage of youth served by BEST programs. The results from this second OLS bivariate regression model using the violent



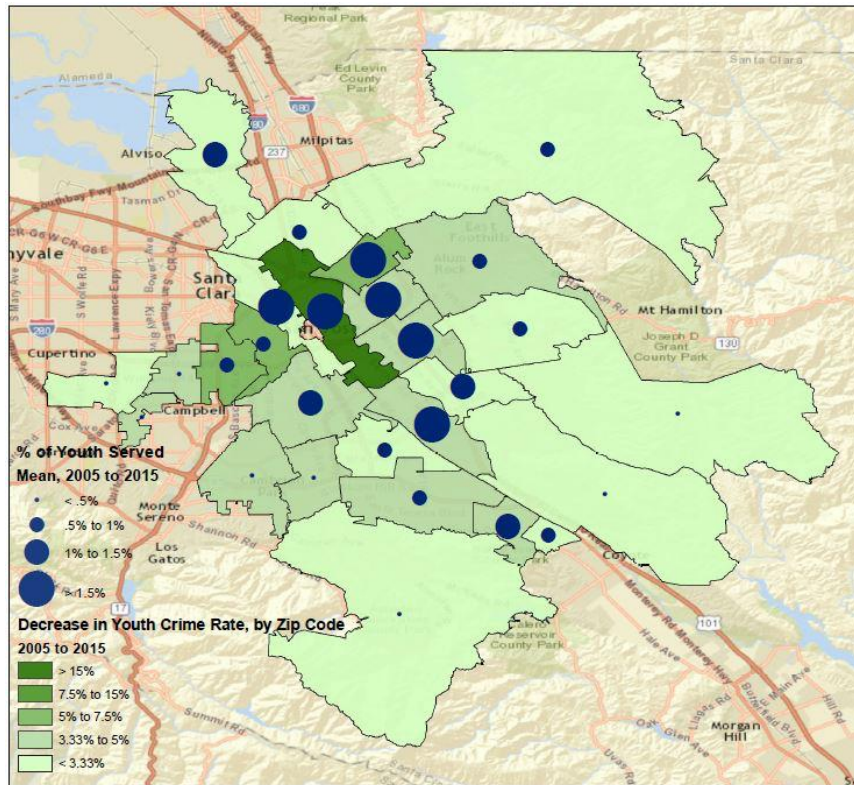
crime arrest rates as the dependent variable produced a similar result. As figure 2 shown below demonstrates, as the percent of youth served in each zip code increased, violent crime arrest rates declined more dramatically. The regression coefficient of $-.11$ indicates that for each 1% increase in the percent of youth served by BEST programs the youth violent crime youth arrest rate decreased by $.11$. This result was statistically significant with a P-Value of $.03$.

Figure 9: Change in youth arrest rate for violent crime by percent of youth served, 2006-2015



The figure below (map) further illustrates this result.

Figure 10: Percent of youth served by BEST services and decrease in youth arrest rate, 2005-2015



Reductions in Juvenile Justice System Involvement among BEST Youth

AT A GLANCE...

- ❖ Youth were 82% less likely to be referred to SCCPD for an alleged delinquent offense after enrolling in a BEST program.
- ❖ Youth were 87% less likely to be adjudicated with a sustained delinquent offense after enrolling in a BEST program.

Given the compelling evidence of BEST's impact on youth crime across San José, the evaluation team decided to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the impact of BEST services on youth justice system involvement. Because this analysis was intended to look only at direct impact of BEST involvement on those young people who already have a history of contact with the justice system, we began this effort by identifying those BEST programs that serve the highest risk youth and those most likely to have had justice system involvement.

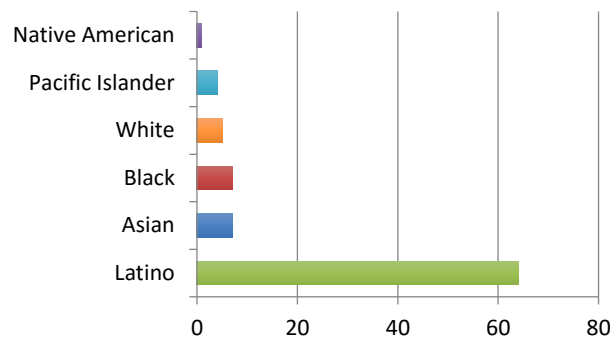
RDA, in coordination with PRNS, identified 10 CBOs whose work most directly targets justice-involved youth, nine of whom agreed to work with RDA to obtain and share consented service data for individual clients. RDA worked with these nine BEST-funded providers to collect client-level data on service receipt, including date of enrollment; hours of services provided; service type (individual, group, or work hours); and client demographic information. We then worked with the Santa SCCPD to collect data on clients' justice-system involvement, including referrals to the Probation Department and sustained delinquent offenses, between October 1, 2012 and October 31, 2015. These data were then analyzed to measure differences in justice system involvement before and after enrollment in BEST programming.

involvement before and after enrollment in BEST programming.

BEST Client Overview

Among the 89 BEST clients who had a SCCPD record, 72 (81%) had at least one referral and/or sustained offense during the study period (between September 2013 and September 2015). The majority of these 89 clients were male (80% male and 20% female) and a majority were Latino/Hispanic (73%). The age of these clients when they enrolled in BEST programming ranged from 14 years old through 24 years old, averaging 17.5 years old.

Race/Ethnicity of Clients with Referrals
(n = 89)



Best Client Referrals to SCCPD

Among the 89 BEST clients who had a SCCPD record, 80% were referred to SCCPD at least once during the study period, a majority of whom were referred prior to program enrollment while a significantly smaller proportion were referred after program enrollment. About a quarter of the matched clients were referred to SCCPD both before and after enrolling in BEST programs.



Table 1. Summary of BEST Client Referrals to SCCPD

Matched clients (<i>n</i> = 89) with referral(s)...	#	%
any time within two years of program enrollment	71	79.78%
pre-program enrollment	68	77.53%
post-program enrollment	24	26.97%
pre-program enrollment and post-program enrollment	22	24.72%

As shown in Figure 11, the percentage of BEST clients who were referred to SCCPD after enrolling in BEST programs was far smaller than the percentage of BEST clients who were referred to SCCPD prior to enrolling in BEST programs.

Figure 11: Percent of BEST Clients Referred to SCCPD Before and After BEST Program Enrollment

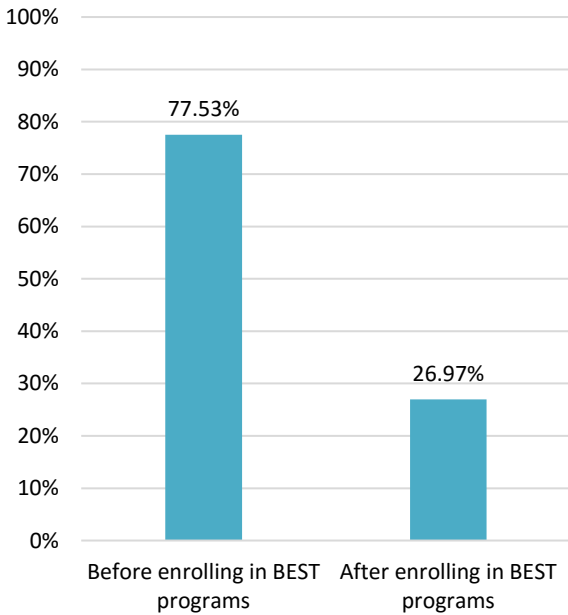
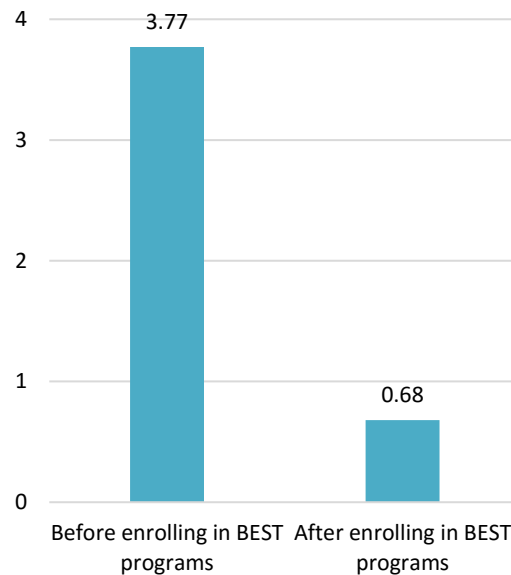


Figure 12: Average Number of Referrals to SCCPD Before and After BEST Program Enrollment



Further, a paired samples *t*-test showed that the number of referrals to SCCPD declined at a statistically significant rate ($t(70) = 9.415, p < .001$) after enrolling in BEST programs. This indicates that BEST services were effective in lowering the frequency at which clients were being referred to SCCPD. Overall, BEST clients experienced an 82% reduction in the average number of times they were referred to SCCPD after enrolling in BEST programs (see Figure 12).

BEST Clients with Sustained Delinquent Offenses

Among the 89 consented BEST clients who had a SCCPD record, 30% had one or more sustained delinquent offense during the study period, nearly all of whom had sustained delinquent offenses prior to program enrollment while only five clients had sustained delinquent offenses after program enrollment. Less than

5% of the matched clients had sustained delinquent offenses both before and after enrolling in BEST programs.

Table 2. Summary of Sustained Delinquent Offenses Accrued by BEST Clients

Matched clients (<i>n</i> = 89) with sustained offense(s)...	#	%
any time within two years of program enrollment	27	30.34%
pre-program enrollment	26	29.21%
post-program enrollment	5	5.62%
pre-program enrollment and post-program enrollment	4	4.49%

As shown in Figure 13, the proportion of BEST clients who had sustained delinquent offenses substantially decreased after enrolling in BEST programs. Among the 89 clients with an SCCPD record, 29% of clients had one or more sustained delinquent offense prior to enrolling in programs whereas only 6% had one or more sustained delinquent offense after enrolling in programs.

Figure 13: Percent of BEST Clients with Sustained Delinquent Offenses Before and After BEST Program Enrollment

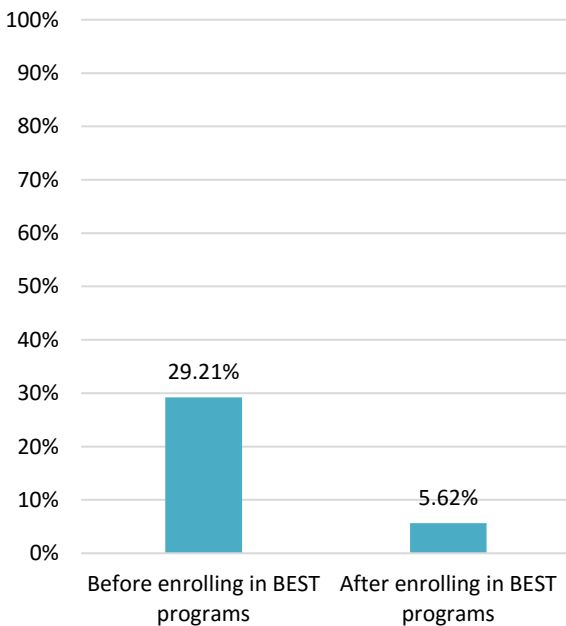
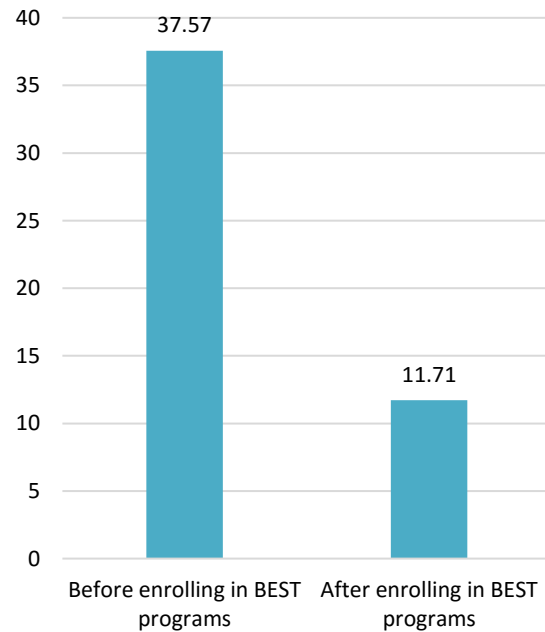


Figure 14: Average Number of Sustained Delinquent Offenses Accrued Before and After BEST Program Enrollment



A paired samples *t*-test showed that the number of sustained delinquent offenses among BEST clients declined at a statistically significant rate after enrolling in BEST programs ($t(26) = 44.537, p < .001$). This

indicates that BEST services were extremely effective in lowering the frequency at which youth were being adjudicated delinquent. Overall, BEST clients experienced an 87% reduction in the average number of sustained delinquent offenses after enrolling in BEST program services.

Changes among Youth with Continued Justice System Involvement

In addition to examining whether and to what extent BEST participation reduced the percentage of youth experiencing negative contact with the juvenile justice system, RDA also examined the outcomes for matched BEST clients who had SCCPD contact both before and after enrolling in BEST programs. These analyses are targeted to examine the harm reduction impact of programming on at-risk youth.

Among 25% of BEST clients who were referred to SCCPD both before and after enrolling in BEST programs, the average number of incidents for which they were referred decreased by 65% (see Figure 15) after they began their BEST programs. Similarly, among the 4% of BEST clients who were adjudicated delinquent both before and after enrolling in BEST programs, the average number of delinquency adjudications decreased by one-third (32.8%) after enrolling in BEST programs (see Figure 16).

AT A GLANCE...

- ❖ Youth who had contact with SCCPD both before and after enrolling in a BEST program had 65% fewer referrals than they did prior to program participation, indicating that while they may have continued to engage in some delinquent behaviors, they did less frequently.
- ❖ Youth who were adjudicated with sustained delinquent offenses both before and after enrolling in a BEST program had 33% fewer sustained delinquent offenses than they did prior to program participation.

Figure 15: Average Number of SCCPD Referrals Before and After BEST Program Enrollment

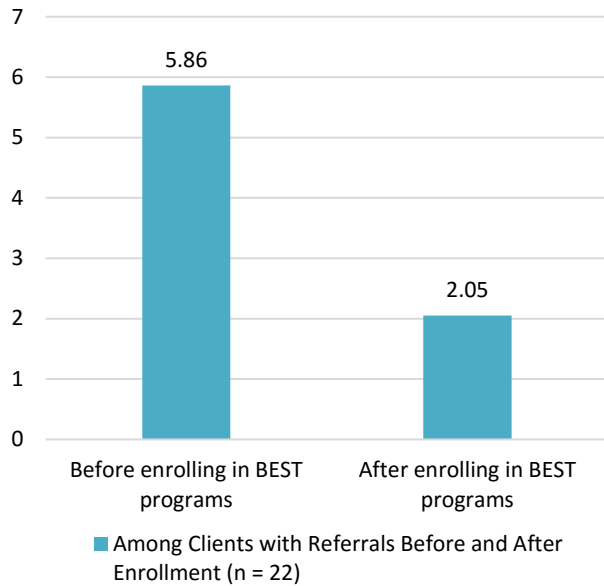
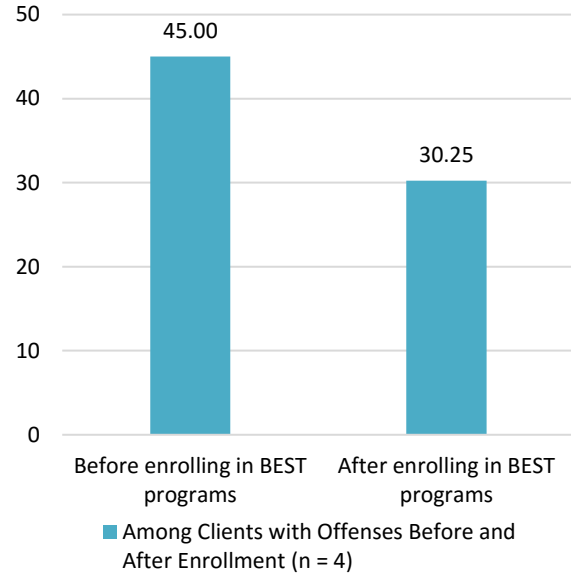


Figure 16: Average Number of Sustained Delinquent Offenses Accrued Before and After BEST Program Enrollment



These findings suggest that while a small selection of youth may continue to engage in some delinquent behaviors after enrolling in BEST programming, they did so at substantially lower rates.

Changes in Youth Gang Involvement

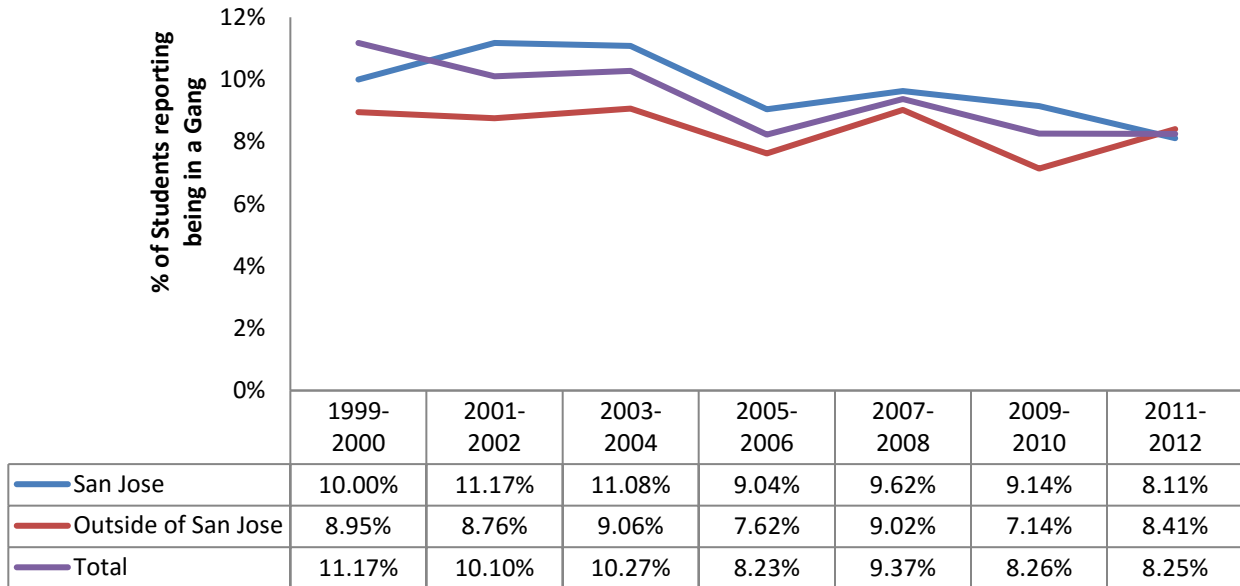
While the analyses described above present strong and statistically significant evidence of BEST's success in reducing youth crime in San José, limitations in how SJPD and SCCPD track gang-related incidents mean that these analyses cannot also examine the impact of BEST services or the larger MGPTF on gang involvement specifically. To address this limitation and provide some context on trends in youth gang involvement in San José over the past decade, RDA obtained and analyzed data from the statewide California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), which began asking California students about their involvement in gangs starting in the 1999–2000 school year. To ensure that any changes in gang identification were not due to regional shifts external to MGPTF, RDA obtained data on all schools in the County and compared trends in City of San José schools to trends in other schools across Santa Clara County.

AT A GLANCE...

- ❖ Youth gang affiliation in the City of San Jose decreased by almost 19% between 1999/2000 and 2011/2012, notably faster than the 6% decrease among youth in the rest of the county.

In the 1999–2000 academic school year, 10% of all secondary school students in the City of San José reported belonging to a gang, compared to 9% of secondary schools in other cities in Santa Clara County. By 2011–2012, the last year in which San José schools participated in the CHKS, 8% of students identified as gang members, an increase in gang identification of 19%. Over the same period of time the percentage of students identifying at gang members in other cities in Santa Clara County decrease from 9% to 8%, a more modest decrease of 6%.

Figure 17: Percent of Students Reporting Gang Involvement by Location



Conclusions

Since 1991, the City of San José has worked with an extensive network of City, County, and community stakeholders to implement a coordinated service and suppression infrastructure to promote successful youth outcomes and ensure public safety via the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. As one of the first efforts of its kind, MGPTF has simultaneously drawn from best practices and research guidance while also building its own set of practices that have been part of the roadmap for how other cities work collaboratively to address youth crime. Over time, MGPTF's unique combination of structure and flexibility along with the commitment of its diverse stakeholders to work together toward a common end has helped the Task Force endure across multiple mayoral administrations, ebbs and flows in funding availability, and an array of other changes to the larger landscape in which MGPTF operates. Further, more than 25 years after the City of San José first established its commitment to reducing youth crime and the underlying causes thereof, there is now a sizeable body of data demonstrating the impact of MGPTF's efforts—especially the BEST services—on youth crime. Looking across the City of San José, within specific zip codes, and at individual service recipients all evidence the critical impact that MGPTF and the BEST programs have had on San José youth.