

JUVENILE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Early intervention with young boys and girls who exhibit antisocial and delinquent behavior offers the best hope for averting more serious behavior later in childhood, and ultimately the adult legal system. While many people and agencies are aware of these youth, they often fall through the cracks. Recently it has been reported anecdotally that an increasing number of girls are engaging in problem behaviors, some more aggressively than has typically been the case with girls. Almost all intervention and treatment has been focused on boys, so that adaptations are needed to address the specific etiology and most effective treatment modalities for girls. The police are in a unique position to intervene so that youth who are or at risk of offending are helped. In order to assure effective interventions, it is necessary for police to develop projects that are additions or enhancements to their normal, routine activities.

While most juveniles are arrested for minor offenses, the number of juveniles arrested for serious crimes has increased dramatically over the past decade. More alarming is that much of the increase in juvenile violent crime is being driven by individuals under the age of fourteen. These very youthful offenders represent an important demographic for intervention. Research has shown that individuals who have been arrested for a serious crime under the age of fourteen are significantly more likely to continue criminal behavior into adulthood. Compared to older delinquents, these individuals have a two to three-fold increased risk of becoming tomorrow's serious, violent and chronic offender. Research also shows that serious criminal acts committed by youth are often preceded by antisocial behavioral problems that are evident at an even younger age.

The problem of juvenile crime is confounded by the lack of programming targeted at youthful offenders. Comprehensive intervention programs are needed to address the significant problems associated with the development of criminal careers among juveniles. These programs should be developed out of multi-disciplinary partnerships that address the multitude of social, family, educational, and emotional factors associated with juvenile delinquency.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Juvenile Intervention Strategies program is designed to foster proactive, problem-oriented interventions to combat juvenile violence and delinquency. The central focus of this program area is the provision of comprehensive intervention services to those youth, and their families, who commit or are at risk of committing delinquent behavior.

A problem analysis should identify specific problems being experienced in a neighborhood or community by juveniles and youth. Police agencies can document formal and informal contacts with such youth, schools can document in-school behavioral problems and/or truancy, and social agencies can report on their contacts with the youth and/or family as a result of the youth's behavior. Data from multiple agencies and services is part of the development of a partnership and helps to define the dimensions of the problem. Special attention should be given to the extent to which girls are exhibiting problem behaviors. A comprehensive approach to problem analysis should be

designed to identify the extent and causes of juvenile crime and delinquency. The problem analysis should examine the juvenile crime problems in the community, as well as an analysis of the nature and effectiveness of current juvenile intervention programming.

Partnership is a key component of this program area, and projects should include formal agreements with community social services agencies to provide a continuum of services in conjunction with the law enforcement agencies. Partnerships should be developed with prosecutors, schools, probation, substance abuse treatment providers, community groups, and other agencies focusing on the factors contributing to juvenile crime. Projects utilizing combined resources and information sharing networks are encouraged. Well-developed partnerships and protocols allow for the maximum use of available resources and help to establish the need for additional community resources.

The intent of this program area is to encourage activities that have not been done before. Police can serve in a central, organizing capacity. There is a broad scope of potential activities based upon local needs, including mentoring programs, parenting programs, referral/intake for dealing with youthful offenders, and so on. While the youth is the focus of service delivery, intervention and treatment may involve services for parents or other caregivers.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal # 1	Develop and implement an inter-agency juvenile intervention program to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency.
Objective # 1	Identify the unique juvenile crime problems in the community.
Activities	Examine juvenile crime trends with data obtained from police and court records. Obtain data from other social service agencies to ascertain the nature of the juvenile substance abuse problem in the community. Conduct an inventory and assessment of other juvenile intervention programs. Identify gaps in service not provided by existing intervention programming.
Performance Measures	Perform quantitative analysis of juvenile crime and substance abuse for the assessment gaps and needs in services.

Objective # 2 Increase the coordination of juvenile justice professionals and social services agencies.

Activities Develop a strategic plan for all participating agencies. Implement partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding to form an integrated problem solving team among police, prosecutors, courts, probation, schools, and other social service agencies. Develop a task force of key stakeholders and hold regular organizational meetings.

Performance Measures Analysis of contents of memorandums of agreement and other partnership agreements. Statistics on the amount of time each agency spends on the provision of juvenile intervention programming and the number of agency personnel attending local task force meetings.

Objective # 3 Reduce criminal and other problem behavior among program participants.

Activities Develop and implement an individual-based intervention program that includes both juvenile justice sanctions and treatment for identified problem behaviors or educational, social, family deficiencies. Develop a graduated sanctioning plan that addresses violation of program requirements by participants. Maintain the individual treatment plan for six to twelve months and document deviations to the treatment plan and individual program violations.

Performance Measures Statistics on the number of violations, apprehensions, prosecution and adjudications of program participants during the program and after program completion. Pre- and post-test comparisons of school program participants during the intervention period.

BJA REPORTING, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION METHODS

All projects funded through this program must report:

- The number of youth enrolled in the project.
- The type of programming provided to youth and their families.
- The number of program participants that successfully completed the program.
- The number and type of graduated sanctions that program participants received as a result of violations of program protocol.
- The number of program participants who were apprehended for criminal behavior following the completion of the program.