OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem

Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

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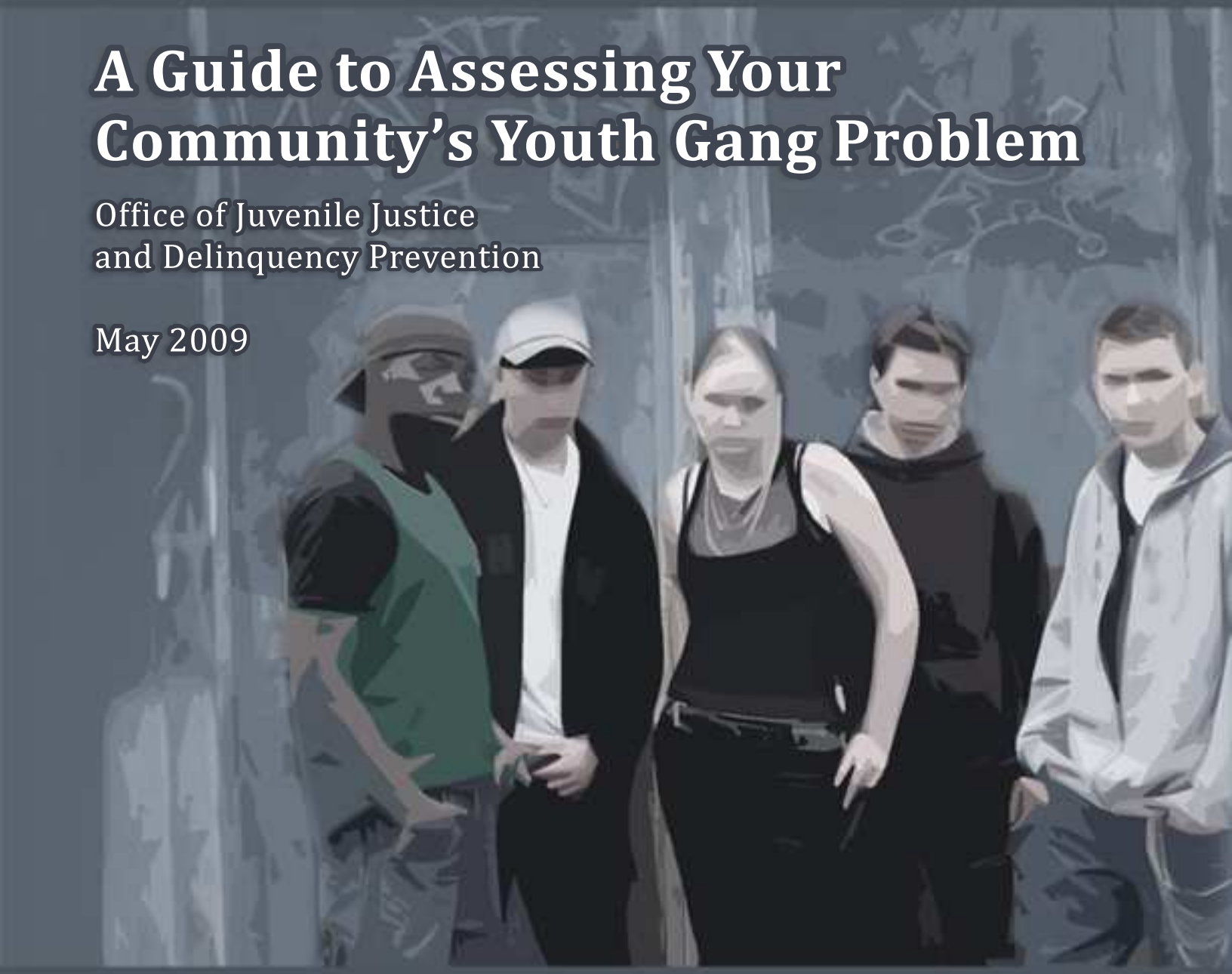

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This guide relies heavily on the research and experiences of a number of practitioners and professionals in the field of youth gangs. Many people contributed directly and indirectly to this document. OJJDP is grateful for the work of Dr. Irving Spergel, University of Chicago, and his associates who, in the early 1990s, collected and analyzed the practices of agencies involved in combating gangs. From this research, Spergel developed a model comprehensive program to reduce gang violence. In 1993, Spergel began to implement the Model in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago. The Spergel Model has been tested, evaluated, and found to have positive results.

With some adaptation, this design gave rise to the OJJDP Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gangs. The initial demonstration sites (Bloomington, Illinois; San Antonio, Texas; Riverside, California; and Mesa and Tucson, Arizona) began implementation of the Model in 1995. In 1998, OJJDP launched the Rural Gang Initiative in four sites (Glenn County, California; Mt. Vernon, Illinois; Elk City, Oklahoma; and Cowlitz County, Washington). In 2000, OJJDP began the Gang-Free Communities and Schools Program. Four sites participated in the Gang-Free Communities Program (East Los Angeles, California; Broward County, Florida; Lakewood, Washington; and San Francisco, California). Four sites also participated in the Gang-Free Schools Program (Houston, Texas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; East Cleveland, Ohio; and Miami-Dade County, Florida). In 2003, the Gang Reduction Program was started. This program was a further adaptation of the Model in that it added prevention and reentry to the Model's concept. The program was initiated in Richmond, Virginia; Los Angeles, California; North Miami Beach, Florida; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

OJJDP thanks the project directors, the staff, and the many individuals at these sites who have contributed so materially to this program and, in the process, helped identify the best practices and lessons learned contained in this assessment guide.

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1. Introduction

In 1987, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began supporting a research and development project to design a comprehensive approach to reduce and prevent youth gang violence. The initial phase of this project was directed by Dr. Irving Spergel at the University of Chicago. The project concluded in the early 1990s and resulted in the development of the Spergel Model of Gang Intervention and Suppression, later renamed the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model. The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model (Model) calls for five core strategies to be delivered through an integrated approach from a team of community agencies and organizations. The five strategies are (1) community mobilization; (2) social intervention, including street outreach; (3) provision of opportunities; (4) suppression; and (5) organizational change.

In 1993, Dr. Spergel began implementing the initial version of the Model in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago. The goal of the project was to reduce the high level of violence of gang members in two specific gangs. Called the Gang Violence Reduction Program, the project lasted five years. An evaluation of the project has been conducted with several positive results, including reduction of serious violent and property crimes, reduction of active gang involvement of older gang members, improved educational and employment status, and fewer total violent crime and drug arrests (Spergel, 2007).

In 1995, OJJDP began to test the Model in five selected sites—Bloomington, Illinois; Mesa and Tucson, Arizona; Riverside, California; and San Antonio, Texas. These sites, part of OJJDP's Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Program, participated in a demonstration of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model in urban and suburban areas. In the process of establishing these sites, it became clear that to successfully implement the Model, the lead agency and its partner agencies must fully understand the Model, the implementation process, and perhaps most important, the nature and scope of the community's gang problems. Experience with these sites reinforced the principle that a thorough assessment of the community's gang problem was a prerequisite to implementation. The evaluations of each site, as well as the evaluation of the Little Village project, can be accessed through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service at http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Search/SearchResults.aspx?txtKeywordSearch=Spergel&fromSearch=1.

The nation's youth gang problem, as tracked by the National Youth Gang Surveys (NYGS), continues to affect a large number of jurisdictions both large and small. Since the early 2000s, not only has every large city (population over 100,000) in the United States experienced gang problems in some form or another, but so have a majority of suburban counties and a sizeable number of smaller cities and rural counties. In fact, it is estimated that more than 3,550 jurisdictions experienced gang problems in 2007, a 25 percent increase over the 2002 estimate. Moreover, during this same period, the number of reported gangs and gang members increased 25 percent and 8 percent, respectively, reaching an estimated nationwide total of more than 27,000 gangs and 788,000 gang members in 2007.

Of course, it is the *activities* of gang members that are of central concern, particularly the gang members' degree of involvement in serious and/or violent offenses within the community. NYGS data reveals a substantially varying pattern of gang crime across the country. In terms of lethal gang violence, NYGS data shows that, with few exceptions, nearly all gang-related homicides recorded annually by law enforcement occur in the largest cities and metropolitan counties. However, the less-populated areas are not without gang crime problems as well. In these communities, gangs are frequently reported to be involved in property and drug offenses. Of further concern, NYGS data reveals recent increases in two

serious gang-related offenses, aggravated assault and drug sales, among a majority of gang-problem jurisdictions nationwide. Data from these survey findings indicate that gangs continue to remain a significant and ongoing problem across the United States.

Responding to the continuing problems of youth gangs and youth gang violence, over the past 10 years OJJDP launched three initiatives based on the lessons learned from the original urban sites' demonstration of the Model.

In 1998, citing recent evidence that youth gangs were emerging in rural areas, OJJDP developed the *Rural Gang Initiative* (RGI), based on the experiences of the urban sites, with a focus on conducting a comprehensive gang problem assessment and development of an implementation plan.

In 2000, OJJDP began the *Gang Free Schools and Communities Initiative.* In this initiative, the *Gang Free Schools Program* seeks to develop a school component to the Comprehensive Gang Model that involves development of projects within the school setting and linking of the school component to community-based gang prevention, intervention, and suppression activities. Sites in the *Gang Free Communities Program* were to demonstrate the Model but were to leverage local resources more extensively.

In 2003, OJJDP launched the *Gang Reduction Program.* This program is designed to reduce gang activity in targeted neighborhoods. The program's goals seek to integrate prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry activities and use existing community resources to sustain the program.

The next section provides a brief description of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model. For more information on the research and development of the Model, as well as information about demonstration sites, refer to *Best Practices To Address Community Gang Problems*, pp. 1–4 and Appendix A. This document is available at http://www.ojjdp.gov/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=253257. It is also recommended that project staff also review *The Youth Gang Problem: A Community Approach* by Dr. Irving Spergel for a more in-depth discussion of Dr. Spergel's theory (Spergel, 1995) and *Reducing Gang Crime: The Little Village Project* (Spergel, 2007, and Spergel et al., 2006).

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

The terms "youth gang" and "street gang" are commonly used interchangeably and refer to neighborhood or street-based youth groups that are made up substantially of individuals under the age of 24. While youth in this age group are most likely to be engaged in or at risk of committing serious or violent gang crimes, the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model focuses primarily on youth gang members under 22 years of age, based on OJJDP's authorizing legislation. Motorcycle gangs, prison gangs, ideological gangs, and hate groups comprising primarily adults are excluded from the definition.

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model holds that "neither social disorganization, underclass, nor poverty theory alone explains the scope and nature of delinquent of criminal gang association and gang crime. Social disorganization or lack of integration of essential elements of a local community system provides the basic stimulus for the formation of youth gangs. Lack of legitimate opportunity and the presence of alternative criminal opportunities are more likely to explain the character and scope of gang behavior" (Spergel, 1995).

Drawing principally on social disorganization theory to frame the development of the Model, Dr. Irving Spergel and a research team from the University of Chicago expected that there were core strategies to address gang youth, their families, and the community institutions that would promote youths' transition from adolescence to productive members of society. With this in mind, law enforcement and other

agency personnel in 65 cities reporting problems with gangs were surveyed. Analysis of that information, in conjunction with site visits and focus groups, led to a mix of five strategies (described below) that address key concerns raised by the theory on which the Model is based.

Five Strategies of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

Community mobilization: Involvement of local citizens, including former gang youth, community groups and agencies, and the coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies.

Opportunities provision: The development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeted at gang-involved youth.

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

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

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

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model requires that these strategies be delivered in a focused manner, based on a thorough assessment of the current gang problem in a community, its potential causes, and contributing factors. Although early implementation of the Model specifically and principally involved intervention and suppression, more recent demonstration sites have included prevention as a key component of their projects. The inclusion of prevention activities is based on the premise that focused gang prevention efforts must work in tandem with the other strategies. It is this combination of strategies that ensures both short- and long-term reduction in gang crime and violence, and that the most cost-effective approach, prevention, can have an effect on those most at risk of gang involvement (Wyrick, 2006).

To facilitate implementation of the strategies, the community and its leaders must be willing to acknowledge the gang problem. If denial is present, it must be confronted. Once the gang problem is acknowledged, a thorough understanding of the nature, scope, and dynamics of the problem is required. The problem must be regarded as systemic in the sense that activities of youth in gangs and the community response to the gang problem are interactive. The behavior of youth and community organizations in relation to each other is expected to change in the course of implementation of the Model.

In summary, the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model espouses an approach that includes several essential elements:

1. The gang project is overseen by a <u>steering committee</u> of policy or decision makers from agencies and organizations that have an interest in or responsibility for addressing the community's gang problem. These representatives should not only set policy and oversee the overall direction of the gang project, but they should take responsibility for spearheading efforts in their own organizations to remove barriers to services, and to social and economic opportunities; develop effective criminal justice, school, and social agency procedures; and promote policies that will further the goals of the gang strategy. The steering committee will

also provide general direction to the agencies collaborating in conducting a gang problem assessment.

2. Initial and continuous problem assessment using qualitative and quantitative data. Those with responsibility for addressing the problem—representatives of police agencies, schools, probation, youth agencies, grassroots organizations, government, and others—participate in identifying the gang problem's nature and causes. The assessment results in an understanding of who is involved in gang crime and where in the community it is concentrated. This, in conjunction with other data and information, enables targeting of a community/neighborhood where gang crime most often occurs and the target populations.

3. Once the problem is described, an implementation plan is developed for coordinating efforts of and sharing appropriate information among those who work with gang youth on a daily basis. Goals and objectives based on the assessment findings should be developed for each of the five core strategies. Rationales for services, tactics, and policies and procedures that involve each of the key agencies should be articulated and then implemented for each of the five strategies. These activities must be closely coordinated and integrated to ensure that the work of collaborating agencies is complementary.

4. An intervention team is a primary component of the Model. The goal of the intervention team is to share information that presents opportunities for all members of the team to engage gang youth and work together to determine appropriate services for the youth. Agencies represented on the team should include police, juvenile and adult probation, street outreach staff, school personnel, social service agency staff, job/employment development representatives, and others who may provide intervention services to youth.

5. Community capacity building for sustainability should be considered and built into the implementation plan at the start of the project. Capacity-building for both short- and long-term issues should be considered, including support from the business community and federal and state funds to develop anti-gang strategies.

6. Ongoing data collection and analysis to inform the process and evaluate its impact. Data about the progress of the project also helps leverage funds and resources and identifies needed changes in the implementation plan.

Assessing the Gang Problem

America is a nation of problem solvers. We see something that is not working and put our energy into making it right. Often, however, our first idea of what might work does not. This is particularly true if time is not taken to understand the problem in as much detail as possible. Such is the case with gang crime. Too often, because gangs represent a serious threat to the safety of our communities, it is assumed that more police, increased suppression efforts, or tougher legislation alone will counter gangs when research and experience both suggest that a comprehensive approach will be more successful. In many communities, gang crimes are only the tip of an iceberg that includes an array of symptoms, risk factors, and bad outcomes. What makes the problem more complicated is its diversity: white, black, Hispanic, and Pacific-Asian gangs differ, even in the same city. Gangs, even when they have the same names, are different across cities and towns and use a mix of gang cultures and symbols (Starbuck et al., 2001).

Up-front assessment and planning of the gang problem can save both time and resources. It also can prevent other pitfalls such as overstating the scope of the problem, alarming community residents unnecessarily, and wrongly labeling youth as gang members and possibly violating their civil rights.

Why Focus on Gangs and Not Juvenile Delinquency?

For years, youth-related gang crime has been growing, but the extent and nature of crimes committed by gang members are only now beginning to emerge. Are gangs really responsible for increases in crime, or are youth who are similarly at risk but do not join gangs committing just as many crimes? From the earliest to the most recent studies, criminologists have consistently found that, when compared with both delinquent and nondelinquent youth who do not belong to gangs, gang members are far more involved in delinquency, especially serious and violent delinquency (Esbensen, 2000; Battin-Pearson et al., 1998).

Few estimates exist of the proportion of all delinquent acts for which gang members are responsible; that is, although it is known that gang members have a higher rate of offending than nonmembers, the proportion of the total amount of crime that can be attributed to them is unknown. This is an important issue because, if gang members are responsible for a large proportion of all offenses, efforts to reduce the overall amount of crime in society will not be successful unless those efforts include effective gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs (Thornberry and Burch, 1997).

OJJDP-supported longitudinal studies in Denver, Seattle, and Rochester have shown that gang members are responsible for a large proportion of both violent and nonviolent delinquent acts, as self-reported in each study's sample. Gang members commit serious and violent offenses at a rate several times higher than nongang youth. In Denver, gang members committed approximately three times as many serious and violent offenses as nongang youth. In Rochester, the differences were even greater—gang members committed seven times as many violent acts, and in Seattle, five times as many. These same studies found that youth gang members reported committing a disproportionate share of nonviolent offenses such as minor assaults, felony thefts, minor thefts, drug trafficking, property offenses, and serious delinquencies (Howell, 1998).

In the Seattle sample, gang members self-reported committing 58 percent of general delinquent acts, 51 percent of minor assaults, 54 percent of felony thefts, 53 percent of minor thefts, 62 percent of drug trafficking offenses, and more than 59 percent of property offenses (Battin-Pearson et al., 1998). In the Denver sample, gang members self-reported committing 43 percent of drug sales and 55 percent of all street offenses (Esbensen et al., 1993). In the Rochester sample, gang members reported committing 70 percent of drug sales, 68 percent of all property offenses, and 86 percent of all serious delinquencies (Thornberry, 1998).

Purpose of the Assessment

Research has consistently shown that gang problems differ among and within communities (Howell, 1998). Unless communities explore and clearly understand the nature and scope of their gang problems based on multiple sources of information, they cannot begin to respond effectively or efficiently. A properly conducted assessment of the gang problem will:

- Identify the most serious and prevalent gang-related problems.
- Determine potential factors contributing to gang problems.
- Identify target group(s) for prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts.
- Shape community mobilization efforts and identify community members who should be involved.
- Identify various organizational or systems issues that must be addressed to have a long-term effect on the problem.
- Identify current efforts to address gangs and gang-involved youth.

A comprehensive assessment of the gang problem incorporates the data, the experience of service providers, and the views of parents, youth, and community residents. The problem of youth gang violence must in fact exist, be perceived, and be communicated as a problem or a threat to the community. An assessment is the most important step in the design and implementation of the community's plan to address the youth gang problem. Guided by data, the assessment reliably measures the scope and depth of the gang problem to provide the basic information needed to develop strategic plans.

Sites that conducted a comprehensive assessment found that they were better equipped during the planning and implementation process to design appropriate responses. The assessment process helped sites determine types and levels of gang activity, gang crime patterns, community perceptions, and service gaps. They also were able to better target appropriate populations, understand and explain why those populations merited attention, and make the best use of available resources.

The assessment process consists of three general steps:

- Laying the groundwork: Assembling those individuals who will oversee the entire process and providing direction for data collection efforts
- Collecting and interpreting the data: Collecting and interpreting data on a range of indicators in multiple domains
- Preparing an assessment report: Preparing findings and the final report

This guide describes the data variables and data-collection instruments, as well as sources of data. It also provides suggestions on how to organize and analyze the data and guidelines for preparing an assessment report. Other portions of this guide deal with definitions of gang and gang crime, issues of confidentiality and consent, and other information relevant to conducting the assessment.

Information from the assessment is vital if the community is to spend time and money where it will do the most good. Three compelling reasons for conducting this assessment are that (1) each community is unique and needs customized programs and activities; (2) data bring an objective research-based perspective and help move the discussion from "what we think" to "what we know"; and (3) the data create a baseline against which progress can be measured and documented.

Findings from the assessment will provide local policymakers and practitioners with an unbiased source of information and set the stage for the creation of goals, objectives, and activities. The guide has been developed to assist these stakeholders in assessing and understanding their youth gang problems and developing an integrated plan to reduce gang crime in their communities. It is meant specifically to assist those individuals who will conduct the assessment, as well as those who will oversee the assessment effort and planning process. It draws on the experience of communities that have developed and implemented an anti-gang project but is flexible enough to accommodate community differences. The methodology described here draws from the best of tested techniques, including those described in the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) publication, *Addressing Community Gang Problems: A Practical Guide (1998)* and an earlier version of this manual published in 2002. It includes lessons learned from five years of implementing and evaluating the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model in five urban sites and best practices and lessons learned from replication of the Model in 16 additional sites.

This manual is intended to be a precursor to *A Guide to Implementing the Comprehensive Gang Model*, which, drawing on the information provided by the assessment, will provide a process for developing a comprehensive plan to implement the Model's five core strategies.

2. Getting Started

Committed leadership must be available at the outset to oversee the assessment process, provide direction for the data-collection phase, and guide the community in using the data to plan further action. Sites that have conducted comprehensive gang assessments have found the following administrative structure to be effective.

First, policymakers in key agencies must be engaged to commit to fully participate in the assessment, allow access to data from their agencies, and allow staff members to work on collecting and analyzing data. This group of policymakers will be referred to as the **Steering Committee**.

Because it is unlikely that agency heads and community leaders will have the necessary time to handle the details and day-to-day activities of conducting the assessment, a smaller work group should be convened by the Steering Committee. This **Assessment Work Group** will represent the key agencies in the work of the assessment process, including gathering, analyzing, and compiling the data in a usable form. These individuals may serve in a dual capacity on both the Steering Committee and the Assessment Work Group, if they desire, or may be appointed by the key agencies to work on the assessment.

In general, the analysis required for the assessment is not complex, but a partner with experience in manipulating and analyzing data may be helpful for some pieces of the assessment. This individual/agency will be referred to as the **Research Partner**.

Because the relationships between interacting agencies can be quite complex, and because the collection, analysis, dissemination, and action-planning from this assessment require a great deal of work, it is essential that an individual coordinate this effort. This individual will be referred to as the **Project Director**.

All of these designated groups/individuals will be discussed in greater depth in this chapter.

The Steering Committee

Assessments are of little use if the results or recommendations are not accepted by those who have the authority to implement the approaches proposed to respond to the gang problem. Since these individuals must ultimately agree to a plan for addressing and solving gang problems, it is vital that they be involved in the effort from the beginning.

Steering Committee membership should be diverse and composed of key policymakers and administrative leaders of agencies and community organizations concerned with the community's gang problem, as well as other, more informal community leaders. The members should have decision-making responsibilities, be able to make agency policy changes, and be influential with community groups and/or neighborhood groups.

A critical aspect of conducting a comprehensive assessment is commitment to support the project by the primary law enforcement agency and the office of the mayor or county executive. The Steering Committee should also include representatives of:

- Probation (juvenile and adult)
- Parole (juvenile and adult)

- Prosecution
- Courts (juvenile and adult)
- Schools (mainstream and alternative)
- Youth and family agencies
- Business community
- Faith community
- Manpower and job-training agencies
- Grassroots organizations
- Public housing
- Local neighborhood associations
- Federal and state agencies, if appropriate

It is suggested that a well-respected and active member of the community assume the duties of Steering Committee chair. Chairs in communities that have conducted these types of assessments have included directors of community-based agencies, police chiefs, mayors, school district administrators, and other types of agency heads. The main qualifications of a chair include:

1. Strong interpersonal and leadership skills.
2. Perceived as calm, objective, and resistant to political manipulation.
3. Receiving no financial benefit from the assessment.
4. Serving in a professional role where he or she is a peer of other policymakers.

The chair may be appointed by a key agency or may be elected by the Steering Committee membership using bylaws created by the group. For an example of the bylaws used in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, please refer to **Exhibit 2.1** on page 13. The Steering Committee chair should ensure that each committee member is committed to seeing the assessment through to completion. The chair is also expected to conduct each Steering Committee meeting.

The prestige and influence of Steering Committee members give the effort legitimacy. Gaining the buy-in of key agencies for the assessment, asking key agencies to provide a written commitment to participate in the assessment, and providing access to data are pivotal factors in succeeding in this work. For a sample letter of commitment and a memorandum of understanding, please refer to **Exhibit 2.2** on page 17.

The committee's job during the assessment phase is to provide overall leadership to the entire effort, create or appoint the membership of the Assessment Work Group, determine what data will be collected and how, provide some of the personnel needed to complete the technical work, facilitate access to data and other resources, and determine how the data will be used and/or disseminated. This initial commitment guarantees assistance from organizations that are directly represented on the committee throughout the assessment process.

An important initial role for the committee is to develop a consensus on gang-related definitions that will be used for collecting gang crime and other data. This consensus on definitions must be achieved

prior to collecting data. The Steering Committee should refer to **Exhibit 2.3** on page 18 to guide the discussion of the following terms:

1. What is a gang?
2. Who is a gang member?
3. What is a gang incident?

It may be helpful for a member of the Steering Committee to have a legal background. This individual can brief the committee on existing laws or statutes relating to these topics and assist with the creation of bylaws. This subject will be discussed in more depth in **Chapter 3, Collecting the Data**.

Throughout the assessment process, the Steering Committee should meet periodically (monthly or bimonthly seems to work best) to discuss the progress of the assessment. The assessment should be conducted in an orderly fashion because some data will lead to collecting additional data. The Assessment Work Group should provide periodic briefings to the committee on early findings from the data-collection effort, and committee members should use this time to begin to familiarize themselves with the data collected at each stage.

During multiple stages of the assessment process, Steering Committee members may be called upon collectively or individually to clear barriers, create policies and/or protocols for data collection, and determine data collection plans. Memoranda of understanding or other written documents should reflect this ongoing and important role.

The Assessment Work Group

The Assessment Work Group is responsible for collecting and analyzing data and preparing it in a useful form for the Steering Committee. A few hard-working individuals can share these responsibilities. In fact, it is preferable to assign responsibility for this work to a core group of four to six persons representing the key agencies. At least one law enforcement officer will need to be assigned to this group to collect the law enforcement data. Limiting the group to this size enhances communication among the team members, improves the quality of the work they do, and shortens the time needed to conduct the assessment by reducing the need for meetings, memos, and progress reports. Other workers will likely be needed to distribute and collect survey forms, conduct interviews, or participate in other data-collection activities, and these workers may be drawn from the key agencies, local community organizations, or a local college/university partner.

The Assessment Work Group should ask the Steering Committee to review all major decisions about the data-collection methods to be used. Although it is the Assessment Work Group's job to handle the details, the Steering Committee must know about and have an opportunity to comment on the populations to be surveyed, the format of surveys and other instruments, and the types of data to be collected and analyzed. It is a good idea to hold a meeting early in the assessment process so the Steering Committee can brief the Assessment Work Group members on their plan and roles. The Assessment Work Group also must keep the Steering Committee informed of barriers to the data-collection process. If barriers are encountered in collecting data from agencies, Steering Committee members should be willing and able to troubleshoot on behalf of the Assessment Work Group to obtain the relevant data.

The Assessment Work Group should apprise Steering Committee members of progress at all stages of the assessment and provide periodic briefings on early findings from the data. For example, when the community resident survey has been completed, the Assessment Work Group could provide early

findings from preliminary examination of that data. Or, as gang crime data are analyzed, a briefing could be provided on the most prevalent crimes gang members are committing and when they are committing them. Even though the data are not fully analyzed at this point, this gives the Steering Committee an incremental look, by type, at data that will be important to other aspects of the assessment. Steering committees in most communities have found that the vast amount of data from the assessment was somewhat overwhelming when presented to them all at once. These periodic briefings also will have the added benefit of keeping Steering Committee members engaged in the project.

After the data have been collected and analyzed, the team should provide a report to the Steering Committee, answering any questions that arise from the data. This report will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

The Research Partner

The Assessment Work Group may want to include a Research Partner to assist in data collection and analysis and in writing the final Assessment Report. The Research Partner should have demonstrated experience and skills in traditional data-collection methods and analysis practices and the ability to display and explain data in oral and written formats. It is recommended that someone from a local planning or analysis unit work with the group on some aspects of the data collection. For other types of data, a local college, university, or other research-capable organization could provide this assistance.

Most of the data analysis that will be performed for the assessment (community demographic data, law enforcement data, school demographics data) is relatively simple and can be performed by someone with a strong background in Excel or a similar data analysis program. However, collecting and analyzing the perceptions data (community, community leader, youth/student, and gang member), which requires dealing with human subjects, can be a more complex task. For these work products, a partner at the college or university level is recommended to help create protocols to protect the confidentiality of participants, and in some cases (particularly with youth/students and gang members) to conduct interviews or focus groups. This partner can also be very helpful in conducting the more complex analysis these types of data may require. The Research Partner should be a true partner with the Assessment Work Group and Steering Committee, providing support to both groups in explaining analysis processes and how the data can be interpreted.

Ideally, the relationship that is developed with the Research Partner can continue as the Steering Committee moves forward to implement plans addressing the problems that are identified by the assessment; this Research Partner can transition into serving as an evaluation partner. In this role, the partner can help to develop plans and protocols for ongoing data collection, gather and store that data, and provide regular reports to the Steering Committee. The partner can also assist the Steering Committee in identifying ways of measuring its efforts and creating self-evaluation processes that can ensure long-term sustainability of the project.

Confidentiality and Human Subjects Protection

You will collect a great deal of information in conducting an assessment of your local gang problem, some of which will be identifiable to individuals. Care must be taken to maintain the confidentiality of this information and to protect the rights of those who have participated in the study. The U.S. Department of Justice has adopted specific regulations for ensuring confidentiality and protection of research participants. These regulations include:

1. Privacy certificate as required by 28 CFR Part 22. Privacy certificates document the procedures that will be used to secure data.

2. Protection of human subjects as required by 28 CFR Part 46 and the role of institutional review boards (IRBs) in complying with this regulation. 28 CFR Part 46 describes the role of IRBs in ensuring that assessment activities that involve human subjects do not violate their rights. Most universities maintain IRBs, and the Research Partner at each site should be able to provide considerable guidance on complying with these regulations.

Project Directors and Research Partners at each site should become very familiar with these regulations and should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to comply.

The Project Director

Most communities have found that a full-time director is required to ensure the completion of this process. In a few communities, the Project Director has assumed responsibility for coordinating the activities of the assessment as a portion of his or her existing job, but this poses difficulties. Having a full-time Project Director helps ensure that the work of the Steering Committee and the Assessment Work Group is proceeding in a timely manner. The Project Director can also work with directors of community agencies and organizations to negotiate possible turf issues and should serve as the primary contact for all involved in the project. In short, the Project Director is the glue that holds the efforts of the Steering Committee, Assessment Work Group, and Research Partner together during this process. Ideally, this individual should also have the skills and background necessary to transition into the role of directing and executing whatever plans are undertaken by the Steering Committee as a result of the assessment. This continuity has been found to be valuable in areas where comprehensive assessments have been undertaken.

The Project Director may also be invited to make presentations about the assessment and the Steering Committee's efforts to community organizations, service clubs, schools, churches, and others. A sample job description is provided as **Exhibit 2.4** on page 24.

In summary, it is important that the Steering Committee, the Assessment Work Group, the Research Partner, and the Project Director clearly understand their separate functions and how they work together during the assessment and planning year. As mentioned previously, the Steering Committee provides overall leadership for the entire effort, including appointing the Assessment Work Group and overseeing their work, developing an implementation plan, and publicizing the effort. The Assessment Work Group's primary responsibilities are to conduct the assessment and prepare the complete analyzed data that clearly describes the community's gang problem, its impact on all levels of the community, possible underlying conditions that are contributing to the gang problem, and potential areas where action is required. The Steering Committee and the Assessment Work Group must work closely together during the assessment and planning phases.

The Steering Committee will:

1. Provide overall leadership for the entire effort.
2. Create the Assessment Work Group and oversee its work.
3. Develop gang-related definitions.
4. Develop an assessment plan.
5. Publicize the effort.

The Assessment Work Group will:

1. Design a data-collection plan.
2. Conduct the assessment.
3. Provide periodic briefings to the Steering Committee on preliminary findings from the data.
4. Prepare a final report for the Steering Committee.

The Research Partner, as part of the Assessment Work Group, will:

1. Assist the Assessment Work Group in all phases of data collection.
2. Assist the Assessment Work Group in analysis and interpretation of data.
3. Assist the Assessment Work Group in preparation of the data as a final report.

During the assessment, the Project Director will:

1. Manage the day-to-day administration of the project.
2. Maintain appropriate records.
3. Arrange Steering Committee meetings; prepare appropriate minutes for each meeting and other required/requested reports.
4. Coordinate and monitor all data collection by the Assessment Work Group.
5. Serve as liaison among the Steering Committee, Assessment Work Group, and Research Partner, updating personnel on progress and challenges and arranging joint meetings as necessary.

Exhibit 2.1
Pittsburgh Youth Intervention Project
Steering Committee Bylaws

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of the Steering Committee shall be the Gang Free Schools and Community Initiative, also known as the Pittsburgh Youth Intervention Project, a project of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Safe Schools Office.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

Based on a data driven assessment ending in 2001, this project is established to reduce gang related violence affecting the learning environment of schools as well as the youth attending those schools and residing in communities in the South Park of Pittsburgh.

ARTICLE III – Goals and Objectives

The overriding goal of the Pittsburgh Youth Intervention Project is to participate in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Program to implement and test a comprehensive program model design for gang prevention, intervention and suppression that will mobilize the multidisciplinary leadership of the community and reduce the incidence of gang related crime and gang membership in and around the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

ARTICLE IV – Project Director

A. Role of the Project Director: The Project Director shall oversee the fiscal and contractual obligations for the project, ensuring the fulfillment of all OJJDP and the School District of Pittsburgh requirements. The Project Director is the individual who is responsible for the administration of the grant under which this project functions.

B. Committees: The Project Director shall serve as the School District of Pittsburgh liaison to the Steering Committee, permanent committees and other ad-hoc committees. The Project Director is required to attend all regular Steering Committee meetings, standing committee meetings and ad-hoc committee meetings. The Project Director will not be a voting member of the Steering Committee. The Project Director will ensure the meeting minutes are recorded and distributed to committee members.

C. Accountability: The Project Director will report to the Steering Committee concerning the status of the project and other relevant issues.

D. Selection: The Project Director will be an employee of the School District of Pittsburgh, and will be selected by the personnel committee of the Steering Committee. In cases of vacancies the Personnel Committee shall meet within 5 days to develop a plan for replacement selection.

ARTICLE V – Members
Members: The Steering Committee shall consist of members of the community at large interested in gang prevention, intervention and suppression.

ARTICLE VI – Governance

A. Governing Body: The Steering Committee shall be comprised of representatives from:

1. Schools
2. Youth Employment Agencies
3. Grassroots Organizations and Community Mobilization Groups
4. Community-Based Youth Agencies
5. Law Enforcement
6. Prosecution
7. Judiciary
8. Probation
9. Corrections/Parole
10. Public Housing
11. Mental Health
12. Drug and Alcohol
13. Evaluation and Research
14. Government
15. Religious
16. Medical Community
17. Business Community
18. Youth

B. Appointment: The members of the Steering Committee shall be selected by the agency/organization which they are representing.

C. Vacancies: Should a member of the Steering Committee that represents an appointed organization vacate the position, the organization which they are representing has thirty days to appoint another member to the Steering Committee. If the appointing organization fails to do so within thirty days, the Chair of the Steering Committee will contact the head of the organization to obtain the name of a new appointee.

D. Voting: Quorum shall consist of 1/4 of the Steering Committee. No action shall be taken unless the action has been approved by a majority of the members of the Steering Committee. At no time shall a vote be binding if less then 12 voting members are present. Should an appointed member not be able to attend a Steering Committee meeting, another representative from the appointing organization may attend in their absence, but the substitute may not vote on any issues that should arise in the Steering Committee meeting. Substitutions shall be limited to no more than two substitutions per calendar year.

E. Parliamentary Authority: The rules contained in the most recently revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Steering Committee. The Chair of the Steering Committee shall make all necessary rulings.

F. Meetings: The Steering Committee shall have no fewer than 4 meetings within a calendar year. The Steering Committee shall invite the public no less than once a year to

discuss the status of the project. Notice of meetings involving votes shall be sent to the Steering Committee Members by the Project Director at a minimum of 7 days in advance. Public notice shall be in the form of an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation.

G. Meeting Attendance: After a member has missed three consecutive meetings, the Steering Committee Chair shall send written notification of the continued obligation as a voting member of the steering committee and if that member/organization deems it necessary to appoint another member to the committee, such member shall be named within 5 days. If no appointment is made, the Steering Committee shall vote upon the removal of such member and/or organization.

ARTICLE VII – Officers

A. Chair: There shall be one Chair of the Steering Committee. The Chair shall preside over meetings. Vice Chair: There shall be one Vice Chair of the Steering Committee. The Vice Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair.

B. Term: No officers shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

C. Election: The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected by members of the Steering Committee to serve for one year, unless a successor is elected due to resignation or removal. Their term of office shall begin immediately upon election. Election of officers shall take place at the April (or spring) regular meeting of the Steering Committee.

E. Vacancy: In the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of the Chair, a special election to replace the Chair shall be held at the regular meeting following the Chair's resignation.

ARTICLE VIII – Committees

A. Creation: The Steering Committee can establish and abolish ad-hoc committees by a majority vote. Ad-hoc committees shall consist of at least one Steering Committee member serving as the chair or co-chair and may consist of members of the community interested in assisting in the fulfillment of the goals and objectives as outlined by this project.

B. Members: All standing committees shall include but are not limited to at least one member from the Steering Committee.

C. Standing Committees: It shall be the duty of the Steering Committee to established the following permanent committees, and appoint its members:

1. Interagency Team
2. Bylaws
3. Personnel

❍ Meetings: Standing committee meetings may be held as necessary as deemed by a majority of committee members.

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

A. Amendment of Bylaws: All proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted in writing to the Bylaws Committee and reviewed by same. The Bylaws Committee shall take one of the following actions:

   1. Recommend approval or disapproval of the amendment to the Steering Committee.
   2. Discuss and approve revisions to the proposed amendment(s) before forwarding the amendment to the Steering Committee for approval or disapproval. In submitting a revised amendment, reasons for the changes shall be provided to the Steering Committee in writing.

B. Approval/Disapproval: All action concerning amendments to the Bylaws shall be voted upon during a regular meeting of the Steering Committee, following the procedures described in Article VI.

Adopted: October 18, 2004 Modified: March 22, 2005

Exhibit 2.2
Sample Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for Agencies Participating in the Assessment

Sample Law Enforcement MOU

As part of our participation in this assessment, the South City Police Department will do the following:

1. Modify the police incident report used by our agency to include an identifier for gang crime.
2. Modify our computer system to collect the gang identifier.
3. Train our officers on the new data collection system and identifying gang incidents.
4. Provide personnel to review past and current incident/arrest reports to identify incidents/arrests that are gang-related.
5. Provide aggregate information from these incident reports to the Assessment Team and the Steering Committee.
6. Collaborate with other law enforcement agencies in the sharing of gang data as appropriate.

Deputy Chief Samuel Young will serve as the South City Police Department's representative on the Steering Committee and will attend meetings on a regular basis.

Sample Probation MOU

This memorandum will outline the participation of the South County Probation Department in the South City's Community Gang Assessment. South County Probation Department will do the following:

1. Probation Administrator Kelly Atkinson will serve on the Steering Committee and attend regularly scheduled meetings.
2. Probation officer Mary Klein will be detailed to participate in the Assessment Team and can provide up to 30 hours of data collection assistance to this initiative.
3. South County Juvenile Court personnel will collect and provide information on the criminal histories of 50 gang-involved probationers in an aggregate form to the Assessment Team.
4. South County Probation staff will participate in the community perceptions gang survey.

Exhibit 2.3
Gang Definitions

Many gang researchers believe that the success or failure of communitywide attempts to address gang problems is likely to rest, in part, on how well problems are understood, defined, and diagnosed. Before the assessment can begin, one of the first tasks of the Steering Committee is to discuss and define key gang-related terms—"gang," "gang member," and "gang incident." This is not an easy task. In fact, multiple meetings will probably be necessary to develop these definitions.

Diverse perceptions and definitions of gangs present particular challenges to communities as they attempt to deal with gang problems in their neighborhoods (Decker and Kempf-Leonard, 1995). The term "gang" carries with it many meanings and evokes a number of images for people. Citizens often mistakenly attribute general delinquent and juvenile criminal behavior to gangs. For some, a gang is a small group of four or five adolescents who loiter on a street corner. For others, the term may identify graffiti writers or taggers, drug users, skinheads, or a group of highly organized youth whose purpose is to make money from drug dealing.

Each community is different, as are its gang problems. What the Steering Committee should strive for is agreement on definitions for use within its community. Do not worry if total consensus is not achieved. What is most important is that those who are being asked for information know how words are being defined. In some sites, this work may appear to have been done already because many law enforcement agencies have established definitions (some by state statute or local ordinance). Nevertheless, existing law enforcement definitions should not be used in the assessment unless they have been validated by state statute or local ordinance and/or accepted by other agencies that will be involved in the project, and by residents of the community. Law enforcement representatives should be encouraged to be flexible and open to considering alternative views of gangs. It is recommended that the committee start with how law enforcement defines a gang and then invite others to share their definitions or perspectives.

Over the years, many attempts have been made to develop standardized and uniform definitions for these terms. Much of this work is summarized below.

What Is a Gang?

The media, the public, and the community often use the term "gang" more loosely than do law enforcement agencies. Through sensationalized media accounts, some citizens equate gangs with highly organized drug distribution networks (Howell, 2007). While drug use and selling have been features of gang life for many years, the perception has arisen that all gangs are highly organized and heavily involved in the drug trade (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1995). The public's definition of a gang often describes a group of individuals—mostly, but not exclusively, inner-city youth—who are highly organized and heavily involved in the drug trade, serious property crimes, and violence.

Law enforcement officials tend to rely on departmental or statutory definitions to describe a gang. In fact, most formal definitions of street gangs come from various law enforcement agencies or state statutes. From the law enforcement point of view, criminal behavior involving a group of individuals is a key component of the definition. However, statutes and law enforcement definitions normally do not distinguish among youth gangs, drug gangs, and adult criminal gangs (which sometimes have features characteristic of traditional organized crime groups).

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC), operated by the FBI, contains a "pointer" system or database called the Violent Gang and Terrorist Organizations File (VGTOF). The NCIC definition of a gang is:

> *An ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons that have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent conduct.*

These acts of criminal/delinquent conduct are defined as:

- Narcotics distribution
- Firearms or explosives violations
- Murder
- Extortion
- Obstruction of justice, including witness intimidation and/or tampering

And any other violent crimes such as:

- Assault
- Threats
- Burglary
- Carjacking

NCIC's definition of a gang also has been adopted by the FBI in conjunction with collection of gang crime data through the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the follow-on to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) System.

The National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations has developed a recommended definition of the term "gang":

> *A group or association of three or more persons who may have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name, and who individually or collectively engage in, or have engaged in, criminal activity which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. Criminal activity includes juvenile acts that, if committed by an adult, would be a crime.*

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department defines a gang as:

> *A group of three or more persons who have a common identifying sign, symbol, or name, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community.*

Increasingly, state statutes and penal codes contain gang-related definitions. A selection of these state laws and definitions as well as gang-related municipal codes can be found at the National Youth Gang Center Web site: http://www.iir.com/nygc.

In some states, definitions have been developed to enhance penalties for certain types of crimes if committed by a gang member. An example is California's Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP) of 1988 (California Penal Code, sec.186.20 et seq.), which, with some modifications, has been adopted by a number of other states.

The STEP Act defines a criminal street gang as:

"Any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal,

a) having as one of its primary activities one or more criminal acts [including 28 specific offenses defined under the law]

b) which has a common name or common identifying symbol;

c) whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity."

Since California adopted this definition in 1988, numerous other states have also codified gang definitions into their state statutes. These include, among others:

Arizona: *"Criminal Street Gang" means an ongoing formal or informal association of persons whose members or associates individually or collectively engage in the commission, attempted commission, facilitation, or solicitation of any felony act and that has at least one individual who is a criminal gang member.*

Connecticut: *"Gang" means a group of juveniles or youths who, acting in concert with each other, or with adults, engage in criminal activities.*

Kentucky: *"Criminal gang" means any alliance, network, or conspiracy, in law or in fact, of five (5) or more persons with an established hierarchy that, through its membership, or through the action of any member, engages in a continuing pattern of criminal activity. "Criminal gang" shall not include fraternal organizations, unions, corporations, associations, or similar entities, unless organized for the primary purpose of engaging in criminal activity.*

Illinois: *"Streetgang" or "gang" or "organized gang" or "criminal street gang": means any combination, confederation, alliance, network, conspiracy, understanding, or other similar conjoining, in law or in fact, of 3 or more persons, with an established hierarchy that, through its membership or through the agency of any member engages in a course or pattern of criminal behavior.*

Nevada: *"Criminal gang" means any combination of persons, organized formally or informally, so constructed that the organization will continue its operation even if individual members enter or leave the organization, which:*

a) Has a common name or identifying symbol;

b) Has particular conduct, status, or customs indicative of it; and

c) Has as one of its common activities engaging in criminal activity punishable as a felony, other than the conduct which constitutes the primary offense.

Researchers who study gangs also have great difficulty in reaching consensus on what constitutes a gang. To appreciate the variety of definitions that have emerged from gang research, the following examples are offered:

> *Any denotable adolescent group of youngsters who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood; (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariable with a group name); and (c) have been involved in a*

sufficient number of delinquent incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or law enforcement agencies (Klein, 1971).

A self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose or purposes, which generally include the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise (Miller, 1980).

Groups containing law-violating juveniles and adults that are complexly organized, although sometimes diffuse, and sometimes cohesive, with established leadership and membership rules. The gang also engages in a range of crime (but with significantly more violence) within a framework of norms and values in respect to mutual support, conflict relations with other gangs, and a tradition of turf, colors, signs, and symbols. Subgroups of the gang may be deferentially committed to various delinquent or criminal patterns, such as drug trafficking, gang fighting, or burglary (Curry and Spergel, 1988).

Who Is a Gang Member?

Gang membership involves very different levels of commitment and participation on the part of the individual. Establishing criteria for membership in a gang is critical to measuring the nature and scope of a community's gang problem and must precede initiation of the assessment.

Once again, law enforcement agencies have attained greater agreement on membership criteria than have researchers. Some agencies have developed gang intelligence systems; and federal guidelines, state laws, departmental policy, or concern about infringement of civil liberties have caused departments to establish criteria for adding gang members to these databases. Documented evidence of gang membership also is required if enhanced penalties are sought under statutes such as the STEP Act.

Increasingly, a law enforcement definition of a gang member begins with a reasonable suspicion that the individual is involved in the criminal activity of a gang. Once that criterion is satisfied, there are usually other criteria to be met before the individual is classified as a member. For example, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department requires that at least one of the following criteria be met before classifying an individual as a gang member:

- When an individual admits membership in a gang
- When a reliable informant identifies an individual as a gang member
- When an informant of previously untested reliability identifies an individual as a gang member and identity is corroborated by independent information
- When an individual resides in or frequents a particular gang's area; or affects their style of dress, use of hand signs, symbols, or tattoos; or maintains ongoing relationships with known gang members; and where the law enforcement officer documents reasonable suspicion that the individual is involved in gang-related activity or enterprise
- When an individual has been arrested in the company of identified gang members for offenses that are consistent with usual gang activity

The NCIC definition of a gang member is very close to that of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, as is the definition recently adopted by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations.

Many law enforcement agencies have also developed criteria for individuals on the periphery of the gang. It is important that such individuals also be identified, for they may represent better targets for diversion and often can be valuable sources of information. NCIC defines a street gang affiliate as "an individual who does not meet the criteria for a street gang member, but is known to affiliate with active gang members, and law enforcement personnel have established a reasonable suspicion that the individual is involved in criminal activity or enterprise, or promotes the criminal activity of a gang."

What Is a Gang Incident?

Two general definitions of gang incidents are frequently used: member-based and motive-based. A motive-based incident is generally thought to be one that furthers the ends of the gang; a member-based incident is one that involves a gang member, regardless of what prompted the commission of the crime. Thus, if a member-based definition is used, the assault of a father by his gang-member son in a domestic dispute is considered a gang incident simply because the youth is a gang member. But if a motive-based definition is used for the same incident, it is not considered a gang incident. Each definition has its advocates, and the community must decide how to define a gang incident. Whichever definition is adopted, its consistent use is what is most important when collecting data on gang incidents.

Gang Diversity

As Steering Committee members work through developing gang-related definitions, they must recognize the wide diversity that exists among gangs. It is important to characterize individual gangs accurately. Not all gangs are the same, and not all gangs are involved in the same types of activities. The Steering Committee must clearly understand the nature of local gangs and the particular problems associated with them prior to developing strategies to address gang activity in the community.

To understand the issue of gang diversity, which in turn affects how a gang is defined, it is helpful to discuss how gangs differ in terms of organization, ethnicity, and specialization. Media accounts of gang activities and gang life have led many people to believe that gang membership always involves drive-by shootings and sophisticated drug-trafficking networks. As noted previously, this is generally not the case. There are gangs and gang members for whom violence is a way of life, and a number of gangs are involved in drug trafficking, which presents a host of problems for some communities. However, other types of gangs are not heavily involved in violence or drug trafficking but may still be of concern.

The popular image of youth gangs is that they are becoming more formally organized and more threatening to society and, therefore, should be feared. Large "supergangs" with thousands of members have existed since the 1960s and, like other gangs, grow in times of conflict or crisis and decrease in size at other times. In recent years, youth gangs have been influenced by several trends. In the 1970s and 1980s, many gangs became more dangerous because of increased mobility and access to more lethal weapons. Gangs of the 1980s and 1990s seemed to have extended their reach to both younger and older youth in terms of membership. They also had more members with prison records or ties to prison inmates and used weapons of greater lethality. They were less concerned with territorial affiliations, used alcohol and drugs more extensively, and were more involved in drug trafficking. Some youth gangs appear to have been transformed into entrepreneurial organizations by the crack cocaine epidemic that began in the mid-1980s. But the extent to which they have become drug-trafficking organizations is unclear. Some groups of youth are not seriously involved in illegal activities and provide mainly social opportunities for their membership. Some gangs seldom use drugs and alcohol, and some have close community ties (Howell, 1998).

The average age of youth gang members has increased over the past 20 years. Survey respondents to the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey (Egley and Ritz, 2006) placed youth gang members in the following age groups:

- Under 15 years old—14.5 percent
- 15 to 17 years old—27 percent
- 18 to 24 years old—37 percent
- Over 24 years old—21.5 percent

There is often community concern that racial and ethnic minorities are overidentified as gang members. National surveys of police departments provide strong evidence that racial and ethnic minorities, especially African Americans and Latinos, are the primary members of gangs (Howell, et al., 2001). Although police data are corroborated by the results of field studies and surveys, the data are subject to the charge that they are biased and overrepresent the participation of minorities (Curry and Decker, 2003).

According to the 2006 National Youth Gang Survey of law enforcement agencies, the ethnicity of gang members is approximately as follows:

- Black or African American—35.1 percent
- Hispanic or Latino—49.6 percent
- White—8.9 percent
- Other—6.4 percent

(National Youth Gang Center, unpublished data, 2008.)

In contrast, however, in a self-report survey of 8th grade students, 31 percent of the students who said they were gang members were African American, 25 percent were Hispanic, 25 percent were white, 5 percent were Asian, and 15 percent were of other racial and ethnic groups (Esbensen and Osgood, 1997).

Despite the disproportionate representation of minority group members in gangs, young people of color have no special predisposition to gang membership. Rather, they are more likely to live in poor, socially disorganized communities with many risk factors predictive of gang involvement.

There is also recent evidence that gangs are becoming more interracial. The 1998 National Youth Gang Survey noted that 36 percent of gangs are estimated to be racially "mixed"; i.e., they are a significant mixture of two or more racial/ethnic groups (Moore and Cook, 1999). Curry and Decker (1998) note that gangs tend to draw their members from their neighborhoods and, to the extent that neighborhoods comprise diverse residents, gang membership will represent that diversity.

Numerous ways of classifying gangs have been devised, although gangs' complexity, variations, and changing structure practically defy static categories. One way of viewing gangs is along a continuum of degree of organization, from groups that hang out in shopping malls; to small clusters of friends who band together to commit crimes; to street gangs composed of groups of adolescents and young adults who form a semistructured operation and engage in delinquent and criminal behavior; to adult criminal organizations that engage in criminal activity for economic reasons.

Exhibit 2.4
Project Director
Sample Job Description

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED:

Receives direction from the Steering Committee; exercises direct supervision over professional and technical/clerical staff.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES: Duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Coordinates meetings and activities of the Steering Committee and the Assessment Work Group and prepares appropriate materials for meetings.
- Coordinates, monitors, and assists with all data collection by the Assessment Work Group and assists with compiling of information required for Assessment Report.
- Coordinates and/or performs the completion and submission of quarterly and annual reports.
- Works as a liaison between the Research Partner, Steering Committee, and Assessment Work Group, updating personnel on progress and challenges and arranging joint meetings as necessary.
- Confers with participating agencies, including schools, juvenile courts, law enforcement officials, probation officers, government agencies, local elected officials, grassroots groups, and others.
- Develops public awareness documents and publicity materials. Provides training on the assessment process.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Desired Knowledge:

- Familiarity with local agencies (schools, social services, law enforcement, courts/corrections), local units of government, and grassroots organizations.
- Knowledge of principles and practices of budget preparation.
- Knowledge of principles and practices of strategic planning.
- Knowledge of principles of supervision, training, and performance evaluation.
- Basic understanding of gang intervention, suppression, and prevention strategies.
- Basic knowledge of youth gang involvement and gang-related activities.
- Basic understanding of statistical principles and data analysis.

Ability to:

- Network effectively with a variety of types of organizations, including government agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, social service agencies, courts/probation/corrections, and grassroots organizations.
- Demonstrate organization, administration, and personnel management skills.
- Work effectively with key community leaders and residents, diverse population groups, and youth.
- Work with high-risk, gang-involved populations.
- Identify community resources to assist in implementation of the project.
- Interpret and apply federal, state, and local policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.
- Analyze problems, identify alternate solutions, project consequences of proposed actions, and implement recommendations in support of goals of the project.
- Gain cooperation and collaboration through discussion and persuasion.
- Exercise judgment regarding appropriate information sharing, confidentiality requirements, and human relations.
- Assist in selection of project staff and train, supervise, and evaluate those staff.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.
- Provide training on the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model.
- Establish and maintain cooperative relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Set priorities and work independently in the absence of supervision.
- Demonstrate knowledge of word processing and spreadsheet software.

3. Collecting the Data

An assessment of the community's gang problem should be based on data, not anecdote. To develop effective gang strategies, the assessment should focus on the level and extent of gang involvement in serious and violent crimes and factors in the community that may be contributing to local youth joining gangs. Ideally, the comprehensive assessment of a community's gang problem will examine five data domains:

Community Demographic Data: *General community descriptive and demographic data to provide a context for the assessment as a whole* **(Chapter 4)**

Law Enforcement Data: *The nature and extent of gang crime and characteristics of local gangs* **(Chapter 5)**

School Data: *Descriptive data on the climate of local schools, characteristics of school students who are involved in and/or at risk of involvement in gangs, and perceptions of school staff members* **(Chapter 6)**

Community Perceptions Data: *Data that describes how key segments of the community are experiencing the gang problem, including community members, parents, community leaders, youth, and gang members themselves* **(Chapter 7)**

Community Resources Data: *Current and historical responses to the gang problem, including gaps in and barriers to services* **(Chapter 8)**

Collecting data across several domains allows for a fuller understanding of local gang problems and the development of possible solutions. Specifically, to implement effective strategies to address gangs, communities need to know:

- What are the community's demographics, racially, culturally, educationally, and economically?
- How has the community changed over time?
- What implications will community demographics have on the community's response to gangs?
- What risk factors are affecting local youth, families, schools, and neighborhoods?
- What crimes are gangs committing?
- Who is committing these crimes?
- Who are the victims of these crimes?
- What is the demographic composition of local gangs?
- What gang issues are affecting local schools?
- What do school staff members and agency personnel say about the local gang problem?
- What do students say about the local gang problem?
- How do community members describe the local gang problem?
- How do local community leaders describe the gang problem?
- How do gang members describe the gang problem?

Data Guidelines

A thorough assessment of a community's gang problem will include data from official sources and information provided by individuals who have particular knowledge of one or more facets of gang activity in the community—police, probation, service providers, parents, school personnel, community members, and youth themselves. Most commonly, gang crime tends to be concentrated in some

geographic areas more than others. Therefore, identification of target areas/target populations and identification of the gangs most involved in violent crime are two intended outcomes of the assessment.

In general, data collected should be the most recent available in a form that permits analysis below the metropolitan area. While some data will be available through routine reports and recent studies, this may not be sufficient. Certain data, such as gang and nongang crime data, will need to be collected or cross-tabulated in a manner that allows for the observation of patterns such as offense locations, time of day, and demographics of suspects and victims. Where this level of detail is necessary, some archival data collection and/or analysis should be anticipated.

Because of the importance of crime data, especially gang incident data, the law enforcement agency with primary jurisdiction in the area affected by the gang problem must already be collecting youth gang incident data in some form or have the capacity and willingness to do so. In most areas, it has been necessary to adapt an existing data-collection system or introduce a new system to collect meaningful crime data.

Chapters 4 through 8 of this guide provide the information necessary to conduct the assessment. Each chapter provides questions that the assessment is designed to answer, to be discussed in a final assessment report. In some cases, recommended formats for data presentation and examples are included in the chapters.

A Step-by-Step Process

The assessment process should be conducted in an orderly fashion because, ideally, preliminary data sets will drive the collection of later data sets. For this reason, the following step-by-step process is recommended:

Step 1: Identify the Target Community for the Assessment

In small towns and rural counties, it may be desirable to conduct a thorough assessment for the entire town or county. In large cities and suburban counties, however, the sheer volume of data precludes collecting and analyzing data citywide or countywide.

Therefore, it is recommended that larger communities scan several broad indicators of gang activity to help identify certain areas as possible targets for more in-depth assessments. These data should have the ability to be easily captured in a short period of time for the entire city. Because the primary threat posed by serious gang activity is violence, the initial scan should consider Part I crimes (as defined by the FBI). If several areas of the city appear to have high levels of violent crime, other factors should be used to further identify a gang-affected "community" in which to conduct the assessment. Other indicators to consider are:

- Information on high-gang-crime neighborhoods/areas from intelligence databases.
- Geocoded maps of gang activity across the city.
- Locations or neighborhoods where gang members live and/or congregate.

Throughout this guide, the term "community" is used as a synonym for city, town, village, or even neighborhood. This targeted community will not be a new entity. Most likely, it will have existed for many years, although the population characteristics, businesses, and economic status may have changed over time. The community will probably have geographic boundaries that are commonly understood by residents and others in the city at large but may be poorly delineated; e.g., South Beach, Northeast, or Downtown. In other cases, sections of a city may have neighborhood names but defy easy demarcation. Examples are Nob Hill, North Beach, and The Flats. In addition to sharing geography, residents of a

community will likely have mutual, but not necessarily common interests. These may be thematic (e.g., clean streets, low crime rate). The population does not have to be homogenous.

The scan of the city should identify one or several communities that should be targeted for more in-depth assessment. Once an area is selected, the comprehensive assessment process can begin.

Step 2: **Engage the Community**

Once the target community has been identified, the membership of the Steering Committee should be scrutinized and potentially revised or broadened to ensure that key members of the target community are included in the assessment process. Members of the Steering Committee should ensure that any new members are brought up to speed on the purpose of the assessment prior to attending meetings. The Steering Committee should also anticipate that members of the target community may have conflicting feelings about some of the key agencies and that historical issues may need to be addressed before moving forward with the assessment. One way that this can be expedited is through defining terms to be used and allowing participants to voice their opinions during this discussion.

Step 3: Define Terms

The terms "gang," "gang member," and "gang incident" are emotionally charged, and there is no national consensus or consistency on how these terms are used. For the purposes of the assessment, the Steering Committee will determine what these terms mean and the implications for data collection.

While state or local laws should not be the primary determination on how these terms are defined by the Steering Committee, it should be recognized that these laws will affect key agencies and may impose limitations on the data. These laws should be examined and clearly understood by all members prior to determining definitions. Because many state laws are used to define whether incidents are gang-related or were created for the purposes of enhanced prosecution, they may create a legal standard that is not required for collecting aggregate data for the purposes of assessment. The distinction between these two uses has caused confusion in some communities.

The goal is to determine how much crime is being committed by gangs in the local community, not to identify individuals for enhanced scrutiny and prosecution. Thus, these terms should be defined to be both inclusive of the uniqueness of the community and community perspectives and workable for the purposes of measuring the problem. It may be a relatively simple process to define these terms, or it may take several meetings for Steering Committee members to come to agreement on the ways these terms will be used. However, this is an important step in the assessment process and it should not be short-changed, even if it is challenging. More information on this issue can be found in **Exhibit 2.3** on page 18.

Step 4: Create a Data Collection Plan and Appoint the Assessment Work Group Members

The Steering Committee should determine the types of data to be collected, including crime categories for police incident reports, and designate Assessment Work Group membership. The data will be collected in two separate steps so that the initial data can drive the appropriate collection of later data.

Step 5: Data Collection, Part 1

The Assessment Work Group should begin collecting the data, as follows:

- **Community demographic data**. This process can often be done primarily online, using U.S. Census Bureau data (10–12 hours).

- **Law enforcement data**. This work can be done simultaneously with collecting community data but will take longer. The law enforcement data should be analyzed to ascertain the demographics of identified gang members and the aggregate demographic profiles of suspects/victims in gang incidents. This work will need to be performed by a law enforcement partner (1–4 months, depending on the level and extent of data to be collected).

- **School disciplinary and demographic data**. Demographic and disciplinary data should be collected from target area schools, and the Assessment Work Group should determine what protocols may be required to conduct the student survey in these schools. This also can be done concurrently with Steps 2 and 3 (1–2 weeks to collect and analyze student demographic data; collection of disciplinary data may take longer).

- **Step 6: Plan to Collect the Remaining Data**. Utilizing the data gathered to this point, the Steering Committee should create a plan to collect the remaining data. At this point, the Steering Committee should:

  – Determine where and how community perceptions data will be collected, as well as any possible barriers to collecting this data.

  – Guide collection of additional relevant community demographic data from key agencies on areas of interest, such as substance abuse rates, domestic violence, etc.

  – Create a demographic profile of the types of gang members to be interviewed (using suspect demographics from the law enforcement data) and a plan for conducting these interviews.

  – Create a plan to collect youth (student) and school staff perceptions about gangs. This plan should include a determination of school district policies on student surveys, consent methodology (active or passive), and plans to collect staff perceptions through focus groups, surveys, or interviews.

  – Create a plan for collecting data on current community resources and activities that may serve gang-involved youth and families.

  – Engage a partner to assist with collecting gang member interviews, youth (student) survey data, and school staff perceptions data.

  – Engage partners, as needed, to provide volunteers to collect community perceptions data interviews and/or surveys.

Step 7: Data Collection, Part 2

The Assessment Work Group members should collect the data described above, reporting to the Steering Committee as required and providing updates and requesting assistance as needed. The Research Partner should collect and analyze gang member interviews, school staff perceptions, and youth (student) surveys. Community perceptions surveys/interviews should be collected. If issues arise that may disrupt data collection, the Steering Committee will work to either clear barriers to data collection or design alternative plans (2–6 months).

Step 8: Using the Data

The Assessment Work Group will organize and analyze all of the collected data, being mindful to note areas in which data domains intersect, conflict, and/or correlate. This data, in a user-friendly final product, should be presented to the Steering Committee (1–3 months).

Once the Steering Committee has achieved consensus around the data provided in the Assessment Report, this data can be used for planning purposes and shaping an individualized response to the community's specific gang problems and contributing factors. A discussion of a planning process that can be used for these purposes is found in a separate manual, "Implementing the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model." The remainder of this guide provides a step-by-step process for conducting a comprehensive assessment.

4. Community Demographic Data

To better understand the community, basic demographic information should be collected. Most of the necessary information will be available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census or other government agencies. Collecting and comparing data for the last several years will enable the community to see short-term trends in the age and ethnic distribution of the community's population, as well as its social and economic structures. It is also important that those working on the assessment have an up-to-date profile of their community. Often, changes in the population composition and economic status of neighborhoods occur very gradually, over time. Current data will preclude judgments being made based on outdated perceptions. These data also should be compared with city-level information.

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about the community, the information that will be needed to answer those questions, and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Community Demographic Data

Questions to Be Answered	Information Needed to Answer	Sources of Information	How to Obtain
1. What are the community's characteristics?	Age, race, gender, mobility, income, and education levels for the most current year.	U.S. Census Bureau	Online search
2. Has the population of the community changed?	Age, race, mobility, income, and education levels as percentage of the total population over the last 10 years (compare community and city/county).	U.S. Census Bureau	Online search
3. Have the community's service needs changed?	Unemployment, public assistance, teen parent rates, demand for drug/alcohol services over 10-year period.	U.S. Census Bureau, various state, county, and local agencies	Online search, phone contact with various organizations

Answers to the following questions should be fully addressed:

1. What are the community's racial, economical, cultural, and historical characteristics?
2. How has the population of the community changed?
3. Have the service needs of our community's residents changed? In what ways?
4. What social or demographic factors (including changes or shifts) may be adding to the gang problem?

Descriptive information should be collected in geographic areas or sectors of the jurisdiction, utilizing the unit of analysis the community uses when conducting planning studies (e.g., for new schools, parks, services). The unit of analysis needs to be small enough to distinguish differences within the community. The following data should be collected:

- Population
- Age/gender

- Race
- Mobility/transience
- Educational attainment
- Median household income
- Female-headed households
- Unemployment rates
- Families receiving public assistance
- Other general risk factor data that may be locally available from community and governmental agencies, such as substance abuse levels (and specific areas of concern), domestic violence rate, teen birth rates, etc.
- Other critical variables as determined locally

A sample table for collecting this data is found in **Exhibit 4.2** on page 37.

Where are these data found?

Census data are collected only every 10 years, and the last full census was conducted in 2000. However, the Census Bureau releases annual estimates and projections by demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, and ethnic origin) for the nation, states, and counties. Annual intercensal estimates of income and poverty are also available online for counties and school districts. Additional census data can be searched by ZIP code to investigate a particular section of the community more closely. These updates are published every year on July 1. An annual statistical abstract provided by the U.S. Census updates most of the demographic information and is available at public libraries or online. Other data will be available directly from various state and local agencies or from public or university libraries. Much of the data needed for this portion of the assessment can be found online. Although collecting these data for the community as a whole is useful, collecting census data for the smallest geographic area—preferably the census tract, where available—is more useful for making area comparisons within the community.

For more specific data to address local community concerns, such as substance abuse addiction rates, domestic violence rates, teen births, etc., community partners should be enlisted who are familiar with accessing these types of data. This data may be collected at the county or city level by governmental agencies tasked with addressing these issues. Other possible sources of information include:

- Local hospitals (injury reports, including those using firearms)
- Community-based agencies (current service levels)
- Community health agencies

How should this data be analyzed?

In general, it is helpful to look at data for the overall community and compare it with data for the target community. How does the area compare with the overall metropolis, city, or county economically, racially/ethnically, educationally, and in age/gender breakdowns? What specific problems and/or issues should be known about this community in advance? How has this changed in the past 10 or 20 years?

For example, in **Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5**, some community demographics are reported in a format that shows distinctive differences between the target community and the larger community.

Sample Community Demographic Tables

Table 2—Poverty Rates		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Families	15,138	457,549
Families below poverty	26.16%	15.98%
With related children under 18 years	31.93%	21.78%
With related children under 5 years	34.39%	25.51%
Female-headed families	3,129	109,723
Female-headed families below poverty	44.28%	30.34%
With related children under 18 years	54.02%	36.84%
With related children under 5 years	60.66%	44.81%
Families below 150 percent of poverty level	43.85%	27.31%
Families below 185 percent of poverty level	54.73%	34.67%
With related children under 18 years	64.20%	46.24%
With related children under 5 years	70.20%	53.18%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

Table 3—Employment Status		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Population 16 years and over	59,824	1,472,506
Population in labor force	30,964	931,236
Percent unemployed	12.35%	7.57%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

Table 4—Educational Attainment		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Population 25 years and over	45,182	1,201,154
Less than 9th grade	40.94%	14.80%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	23.24%	14.79%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	18.83%	20.42%
Some college, no degree	9.87%	19.06%
Associate degree	1.50%	3.95%
Bachelor's degree	3.63%	17.30%
Graduate or professional degree	1.98%	9.68%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

Table 5—Citizenship and Mobility		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Native	56.18%	73.60%
Foreign-born	43.82%	26.40%
Entered 1990 to March 2000	20.79%	13.78%
Naturalized citizen	10.21%	6.98%
Not a citizen	33.61%	19.42%
Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000		

A narrative description of the community, as found in **Exhibit 4.1** on page 35, can also be provided**.**

Exhibit 4.1
Sample Community Description

How is the community described?
South Park is a predominantly Hispanic, working-class community of nearly 85,000 residents. The population of the community is more male, younger, and more heavily Hispanic than the population of Metropolis. (See **Table 5**, previous page.)

More than 80 percent of Hispanic residents in South Park are of Mexican nationality, compared with 72 percent of Metropolis's Hispanic population. No other nationality has a sizeable percentage of South Park's overall Hispanic population. Though Salvadorans comprise less than 3 percent of these populations, their percentages are over 5 percent in Riverside and Smithton, and their numbers reach to just over 10 percent in the census tract that includes the Straightham Golf Course.

While the overall statistics for South Park demonstrate that the population is substantially more likely to be foreign-born than the overall Metropolis population, these statistics do not demonstrate the disparity found across different census tracts in this area. In fact, the percentage of the population that is native-born ranges from a high of 66.6 percent in a portion of East Hills to 37.7 percent in an apartment community in southern Elm Park. One in five residents entered the country in the last ten years; one in three is not a citizen.

Compared with other Metropolis communities, the neighborhoods of South Park are among Metropolis's least educated. Barely one-third (35.82 percent) of the population over age 25 has a high school diploma, compared with 70 percent of Metropolis's population. And while 27 percent of the city's population has at least a bachelor's degree, this is the case for less than 6 percent of South Park's population. In a ranking of Metropolis's neighborhoods, each South Park community falls in the lowest quartile for educational attainment, with the Meridian Heights, East Hills, and Elm Park areas having the lowest rates in Metropolis.

South Park is also among Metropolis's poorest communities. Nearly half of all households (48 percent) earned less than $25,000 in 1999, and nearly 80 percent earn less than $50,000. By comparison, only a third of Metropolis households earn less than $25,000, and only 64 percent earn less than $75,000. While this area is not Metropolis's poorest, most of the neighborhoods of South Park are among the poorest 25 percent in Metropolis.

Poverty statistics demonstrate how poor South Park families are. One in four families lives below the poverty index. More than half of the area's female-headed households with children under age 18 live below poverty. There has been virtually no change in poverty rates in South Park. Based on 1990 Census data, 30 percent of families were living in poverty, as were 58 percent of female-headed households with

children under the age of 18. However, South Park's unemployment rate in 1990 was only 7 percent, though it is now as high as 16 percent in the East Hills.

Employment statistics by industry demonstrate that workers in South Park are more likely to be employed in construction and manufacturing jobs than the overall Metropolis workforce. In fact, nearly 20 percent of South Park workers are in construction industries.

South Park's population is less English-speaking than the rest of Metropolis. Of the more than 75,000 residents over the age of five, only 19 percent speak English only; 81 percent speak a language other than English. The overwhelming majority of the non-English speakers speak Spanish (98 percent). Of the Spanish speakers, 58 percent (more than 35,000 residents) report speaking English "less than very well."

Exhibit 4.2
Data Collection Worksheet

General Descriptive Data		
Category	**Year**	
	Community	**City**
Total Population		
% Males		
% Females		
% African American/black		
% Hispanic/Latino		
% Caucasian/white		
% Asian		
% Native American/Indian		
% Other		
% Under 10 Years		
% 10–14 Years		
% 15–19 Years		
% 20–24 Years		
% 25–34 Years		
% 35–64 Years		
% Over 64 Years		
Median Household Income		
Average Household Income		
Poverty Threshold (family of 4)		
% Families Below Poverty		
% Female Households Below Poverty (with children under 18 years)		
% Unemployment		
% High School Graduates (25 years or older)		
% Single-Parent Households		
Teen Birth Rate (per 1,000)		
High School Drop-Out Rate		
Child Abuse and Neglect Confirmed Reports		
Number of Persons on Food Stamps		
Sources:		

5. Law Enforcement Data

This section will cover two sources of data that can be collected to assess local gang involvement in crime and to get detailed information about the demographics, culture, and climate of local gangs:

1. Gang intelligence databases/files
2. Police incident reports

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about gang characteristics and gang crime in the community, the information that will be needed to answer those questions, and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Law Enforcement Data

Questions to Be Answered	Information Needed to Answer	Sources of Information	How to Obtain
1. What gangs are active? How many members are in each gang? What are their ages, races, and genders?	Name of gang, number of members, demographic makeup	Gang intelligence files, law enforcement records	Law enforcement partners must access this data from gang intelligence files.
2. What crimes are gangs/gang members committing? How has this changed over time?	Police incident report analysis by crime, broken out by gang/nongang	Police incident reports	Law enforcement partners must collect this data from existing hard-copy reports or automated systems.
3. Where/when are gang crimes being committed?	Police incident report analysis of location, date and time		
4. Who is committing gang crimes? Who are the victims of gang crimes?	Age, race, gender		

Gang Intelligence

Gang information is collected by law enforcement officers through observation, informants, field interviews, or questioning of suspects or other persons. This information is used to identify active gangs and gang members in the community and is used primarily to enhance law enforcement effectiveness in suppression and investigation strategies. This information is protected, confidential information about individuals and groups. For this reason, it can be collected and analyzed only by law enforcement personnel.

In many cases, local and statewide intelligence information on gangs is stored in databases. Databases and intelligence systems for the purposes of tracking gang members have been in existence in many cities since the mid-1980s. Systems range from localized databases maintained by individual or metro law enforcement agencies, to statewide systems (such as CalGang), to national databases maintained by the Regional Information Sharing Systems® (RISS) Intelligence Centers. Additionally, a field on the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database can identify individuals as "violent gang members."

Some state and local gang databases feed information on individual gang members to NCIC, thus making this intelligence accessible nationwide.

Many statewide systems (CalGang and Florida GangNet) are based on the GangNet program developed by SRA International, Inc. This program allows for collection of a wide variety of information on individuals, including name, vital information, photographs (facial and tattoos), vehicle information, nicknames/monikers, and known associates. The program can be accessed at participating agencies through intranets or nodes. Participating agencies may also be able to enter data into the system along with accessing it. Other systems, particularly local ones, allow for less detailed data collection on individuals. Most statewide systems (e.g., CalGang, Florida GangNet, Utah Law Enforcement Information Network [ULEIN]) were created or developed, or are presently maintained, with U.S. Department of Justice funds.

Local systems may be as comprehensive as these state systems or may rely on relatively simple software that can be purchased at a computer or office supply store. Some systems were specifically developed by software designers to integrate with existing law enforcement agency incident reporting software. Definitions of "gang," "gang member," and "gang associate," and the criteria used to index groups and individuals, may vary greatly within states from one local agency to another, and from state to state.

For example, the Houston Police Department in Houston, Texas, maintains the Suspect Imaging Database System (SIDS) through its Criminal Intelligence Division (CID). Entries into this database are regulated by state statute. Data from the SIDS is also forwarded to a statewide gang intelligence system maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Similarly, the Salt Lake Area Gang Project in Salt Lake City, Utah, the Salt Lake Metro Gang Unit, utilizes the Gang Reporting Evaluation and Tracking (GREAT) system (a system developed and used in California prior to adoption of CalGang) to collect data on known or suspected gang members. This information is forwarded to ULEIN and to NCIC.

The California Department of Justice maintains the CalGang system, but participating agencies can enter information on suspected/known gang members and also access information from around the state.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) maintains the GangNet database. Many local agencies choose to participate, but others elect to use their own local databases. Data entered into Florida's GangNet system must meet the criteria established in Florida State Code 874, which defines the criteria for indexing a gang member or gang associate.

An analysis of existing gang intelligence can be used to answer questions such as:

- Which gangs are active?
- How many members are in each gang?
- Who is involved in gangs (by age, race, and gender)?

These data are useful to determine the size and threat level of the local gang problem, to identify target populations (by demographic patterns) for intervention and prevention services, and to focus suppression activities. They are also useful as a basis of comparison with demographics of perpetrators gathered from the police incident reports. These data are accessible only to law enforcement personnel and should be provided only to those outside law enforcement in the aggregate analyzed form, without using individual names or references.

Analyzing Gang Characteristics:

For each gang identified in the target community, provide the information for the most current year. The following data variables are helpful to describe each gang and can be illustrated as shown in **Table 2**.

- Name of gang
- Number of members
- Gender (number of males, number of females)
- Racial composition (percentage)
- Age (percentage)

Table 2—Age and Ethnicity, Most Active South Park Gangs

	Age						Ethnicity			
Gang Name	**<10**	**10–14**	**15–17**	**18–21**	**21–24**	**>24**	**Hispanic**	**Anglo**	**Black**	**Other**
Brown Town	0	0	3	27	21	16	64	1	2	0
Central Park	0	0	6	21	24	16	58	10	0	0
The Mob	0	0	2	7	4	1	11	3	0	0
Puro Locos	0	0	0	6	1	0	5	2	0	0
Puro Varrio	0	0	3	15	8	2	25	1	2	0
Puro Vatos	0	0	6	35	4	7	35	18	0	0
South East Block*	0	0	15	20	5	0	40	0	0	0
South East Crips	0	0	0	15	10	5	28	7	0	0
South East Gangstas	0	0	8	25	27	13	55	17	1	0
Hoova Crips	0	0	3	8	0	0	6	5	0	0

After these data from the intelligence file are organized, the Assessment Work Group should report to the Steering Committee on the aggregate gang data and should address the answers to the following questions:

1. How many gangs are active in the community?
2. Which gangs are most active?
3. What kinds of activities are these gangs engaged in? (The police incident data can be helpful in answering this question.)
4. How many members are in each gang?
5. What is each gang's makeup by age, race, and gender?
6. Have any of these demographics changed over time? In what ways?

A sample narrative that describes the answers to some of these questions is shown in **Exhibit 5.1**.

Exhibit 5.1
Gang Descriptive Data

A case-by-case review of violent, gang-related crimes committed in South Park indicates that more than 60 gangs were involved in criminal activity in the community between 1999 and 2001, committing at least one crime in the area. Of these 60 gangs, 10 were responsible for 65 percent of the community's violent, gang-related crime.

The membership of these ten gangs is largely youth and young adults, with 73 percent of the documented membership between the ages of 15 and 24. The membership of the gangs is heavily Hispanic and almost exclusively male.

While these statistics reflect the number of gang members documented in the gang intelligence database, street-level outreach workers provide important context about the history and activity of the gangs in the area.

- **Brown Town**—One of the oldest gangs in East Hills, BT has been around since the late '70s and inspired the formation of other gangs in the area. The gang recruited juveniles heavily during the mid-'90s to sell drugs and commit burglaries and robberies. Many juveniles incarcerated during the '90s are now adult prison gang members who will soon be paroled. The gang is also known for auto thefts, drug trafficking, and terroristic threats.
- **Central Park**—South Park's most active and violent gang, Central Park is responsible for several gang-related murders and increasing numbers of robberies, and it is known to sell large amounts of drugs for prison gangs.
- **The Mob**—Formed in the early '90s for protection from Crip sets in East Hills and Central Park, MOB developed an intense rivalry with Central Park that led to weekly drive-by shootings in the early '90s. The gang is rumored to have connections to prison gangs and is known to engage in auto theft, major drug sales, assaults, and home invasions.
- **Puro Locos**—Formed in the mid-'90s, PL has many members who are undocumented immigrants. The gang is known to sell drugs and commit auto thefts, aggravated assaults, assaults, burglaries, and minor offenses.
- **Puro Varrio**—Known for auto theft, major drug selling, assaults, and home invasions, PV members are largely juveniles who attend schools in the assessment area. The gang has been linked to prison gangs.
- **South East Block**—This gang was started around the mid- to late '90s and was very active at the time.
- **South East Crips**—Known for auto thefts, drug sales, assaults, home invasions, and murders, SECC has continued to grow by recruiting members from Smith Middle School and LeGrando Park. The gang is rumored to have connections to prison gangs.
- **Hoova Crips**—The first Crip set in southeast Metropolis, HC has had a lasting influence. HC members engage in auto thefts, drug sales, assaults, and home invasions.

Police Incident Data

Law enforcement agencies are the best sources of information about gang crime in the community. The goals of using information from police incident reports are to determine the level and types of crimes committed by local gangs; to determine who is committing the majority of gang crimes, demographically and by gang affiliation; and to establish parameters for further data-collection activities.

Automated Systems

Some agencies already use an automated system to segregate gang crimes from nongang crimes in their incident-reporting systems. Most of the agencies use one of two major definitions for this purpose, member-based or motive-based. These definitions were discussed in greater detail in **Exhibit 2.3** in Chapter 2.

Some police agencies already segregate gang crimes from nongang crimes in their incident-reporting systems. This method, usually seen as a field or checkbox on the initial and/or follow-up report forms, makes the process of determining the level and extent of gang crime in a community substantially easier. However, even this system is prone to error. Police incident reports are often submitted by patrol officers, who receive little or no gang training and may prefer to err on the side of caution if they are unsure of the status of the incident or the parties involved. This may result in underreporting of actual crimes in which gang members are involved.

Even if crimes are already segregated as gang or nongang, it is recommended that law enforcement agency personnel audit at least three months' worth of incident reports within key offense categories. At a minimum, it is recommended that law enforcement agencies examine:

- Homicide
- Aggravated assault
- Robbery
- Weapons offenses
- Drive-by shootings (if a separate category from aggravated assault)
- Other crime categories of importance to the community

The auditing process involves reading the available report details and determining whether an incident is likely to have been a gang incident. The focus for the purposes of this assessment is on violent crimes that tend to have more detail in suspect/witness/victim statements and the investigating officer's description of the incident. These descriptions and statements contain the majority of information connecting this incident to gangs. The reports should be examined with an eye for details that might connect the incident to gangs, including:

- Common identifiers of known gangs (colors, bandanas, beads, etc.)
- Verbal expressions of gang affiliation (shoutouts, etc.)
- Groups of similarly dressed victims or witnesses
- Incidents occurring in known gang areas or at known addresses
- Patterns fitting an existing trend in gang activity

Officers found that they could review approximately 20 incidents per hour, per person. This process was made significantly less expensive by having light-duty officers, interns, or analysts review the reports initially; segregating instances that appeared to have gang involvement; and setting aside a reduced number of reports for a second review by experienced gang officers.

It may also be possible to search for incidents involving known gang members as suspects, victims, or witnesses. However, the Assessment Work Group should be aware that this data may be skewed by any existing gaps in the gang intelligence data.

Ultimately, the number of crimes identified through the audit process and the number identified by the system's automated process should be compared to establish reliability. If there is a large discrepancy between the number of suspected gang crimes and the number identified by the automated system, this discrepancy should be addressed by a more thorough review of the reports. In some communities with automated systems to segregate gang incidents from overall crimes, audits found that at least 80 percent of gang incidents were being missed by this system.

Paper Incident Reports

If the system is not automated, a manual review of incident reports within specific crime categories, for a period determined by key policymakers participating in the assessment, should be conducted as described above. Experience shows that at least six months to a year of records should be reviewed. This manual review will create a much clearer picture of the extent and level of gang crime in the community. In most communities, conducting manual reviews and/or audits of police incident reports was found to be time-consuming but worthwhile.

Collecting Necessary Data

A sample gang data collection sheet may assist in ensuring that all of the important data is collected from the incident reports. The form is found in **Exhibit 5.2** on page 44.

Exhibit 5.2
Sample Police Incident Report Data Collection Sheet

Gang Incident Data Collection Sheet

Incident Report #:	Date of Incident:	Time of Day:	Day of Week:	Month:	Type of Crime:

Crime Code:	Location where incident occurred:

	Gender	Estimated Age	Race/Ethnicity:
Suspect 1:	Male	<10	African American/black
Gang Affiliation:	Female	10–14	Hispanic/Latino
Yes		15–17	Caucasian/white
No		18–21	Asian
Unk		22–24	Native American/American Indian
Gang:		>24	Other (specify):
Suspect 2:	**Gender**	**Estimated Age**	**Race/Ethnicity:**
Gang Affiliation:	Male	<10	African American/black
	Female	10–14	Hispanic/Latino
Yes		15–17	Caucasian/white
No		18–21	Asian
Unk		22–24	Native American/American Indian
Gang:		>24	Other (specify):
Suspect 3:	**Gender**	**Estimated Age**	**Race/Ethnicity:**
Gang Affiliation:	Male	<10	African American/black
	Female	10–14	Hispanic/Latino
Yes		15–17	Caucasian/white
No		18–21	Asian
Unk		22–24	Native American/American Indian
Gang:		>24	Other (specify):
Victim 1:	**Gender**	**Estimated Age**	**Race/Ethnicity:**
Gang Affiliation:	Male	<10	African American/black
	Female	10–14	Hispanic/Latino
Yes	**Relationship to suspect:**	15–17	Caucasian/white
No		18–21	Asian
Unk	Acquaintance	22–24	Native American/American Indian
Gang:	Stranger	>24	Other (specify):
Victim 2:	**Gender**	**Estimated Age**	**Race/Ethnicity:**
Gang Affiliation:	Male	<10	African American/black
	Female	10–14	Hispanic/Latino
Yes	**Relationship to suspect:**	15–17	Caucasian/white
No		18–21	Asian
Unk	Acquaintance	22–24	Native American/American Indian
Gang:	Stranger	>24	Other (specify):

Other relevant information (list):

Analyzing Police Incident Data

To determine the proportion of gang crime to overall crime in the community, gang crime must be compared with nongang crime. For purposes of a gang assessment, the number of overall offenses in the community by type, as well as the number and percentage of offenses committed by gangs, should be collected and reported.

Using the data from police incident reports, answers to the following questions should also be considered:

1. How much of the overall crime problem is attributed to gangs?
2. What crimes are gang members committing?
3. Has this changed over time? In what ways?

A sample analysis of crime data is shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3—Sample Analysis of Crime Data

Crime category	2004			2005			2006		
	All	Gang	%	All	Gang	%	All	Gang	%
Homicide	10	3	30%	19	7	37%	13	6	46%
Aggravated assault	399	40	10%	322	54	17%	295	49	17%
Robbery	281	30	11%	239	44	18%	292	57	20%

Analyzing Suspect Characteristics

The purpose of these data is to identify the demographics and gang affiliation of gang members who are most predisposed to commit gang crimes so that effective prevention, intervention, and suppression responses can be designed.

Answers to the following questions should be considered:

1. Who is committing gang crimes by age, race, and gender?
2. Which gangs commit the most serious (violent) crimes?
3. Which gangs are most involved in drug-related crimes?
4. How has the offender profile changed over time (older/younger offenders, race, and gender)?

Table 4 contains a sample analysis of gang suspects.

Table 4—Sample Analysis of Demographics	
Gang Crime Suspect Profile	
Average suspects per crime	2.60
Hispanic	89.45%
African American	8.41%
Caucasian	1.88%
Male	96.19%
Female	3.81%
Under 10 years old	.08%
10–14 years old	5.59%
15–17 years old	21.39%
18–21 years old	40.30%
22–24 years old	14.53%
Over 24 years old	18.12%
Known gang member	75.24%
Suspected gang member	18.85%
Hoova Crips	12
Brown Town	13
Central Park	74
The Mob	37
Puro Locos	9
Puro Vatos	36
South East Block	41
South East Crips	44
Southeast Gangstas	44

Source: Tabulation of crime review performed by Metropolis Police Department.

Analyzing Victim Characteristics

If available, information about the victims of gang crime should also be collected. The purpose of these data is to determine whether victims are affiliated with gangs, innocent bystanders, age, race, gender, etc.

Answers to the following questions should be considered:

1. Who are the victims of these crimes (age, race, gender)?
2. How often are the victims other gang members?
3. What are the patterns of offender and victim gang affiliation over time?

After these data are organized, they should be reported to the Steering Committee, using aggregate information from the data. These data can be illustrated by using appropriate tables, charts, or other graphics as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5—Gang Crime Victim Profile	
Average victims per crime	1.34
Hispanic	92.49%
Male	76.26%
Female	23.74%
Under 10 years old	.85%
10–14 years old	5.81%
15–17 years old	11.38%
18–21 years old	19.25%
22–24 years old	10.29%
Over 24 years old	52.42%
Known/suspected gang member	2.40%
Relation to suspect:	
Stranger	49.12%
Acquaintance	43.82%
Rival gang member	3.89%
Bystander	3.18%

When and Where Gang Crimes Are Committed

The crime data also provides information about when and where gang offenses occur in the community. This information should be broken down by month. From that point, the data can be used for shaping police responses by considering the time of day and day of week that these incidents are committed. When these data are collected on a timely basis, police enforcement patterns can be shifted rapidly to deal with gang crime trends.

Answers to the following questions should be considered:

1. When are gang crimes being committed (month, day of week, time of day)?
2. Where are gang crimes being committed?
3. Are gang crimes more concentrated in particular areas of the community?
4. Are the patterns similar for Part 1 and other gang crimes? Where are the differences?

Using the data on when and where gang crimes are committed, the Assessment Work Group should report to the Steering Committee on trends and indicators. It is helpful to display aggregated data using tables, charts, or other graphics, such as those shown in **Tables 6 and 7**.

Table 6—Gang-Related Crime Time Series by Month

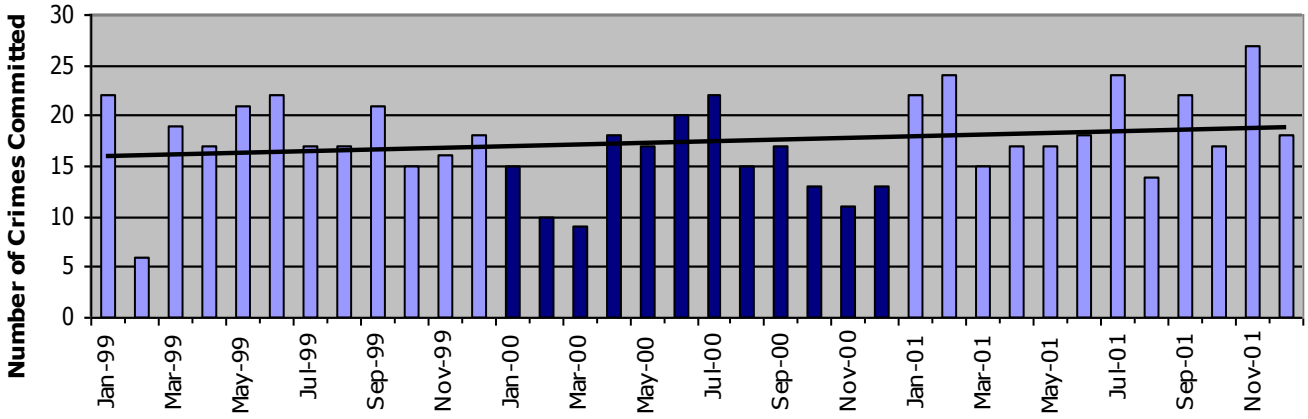
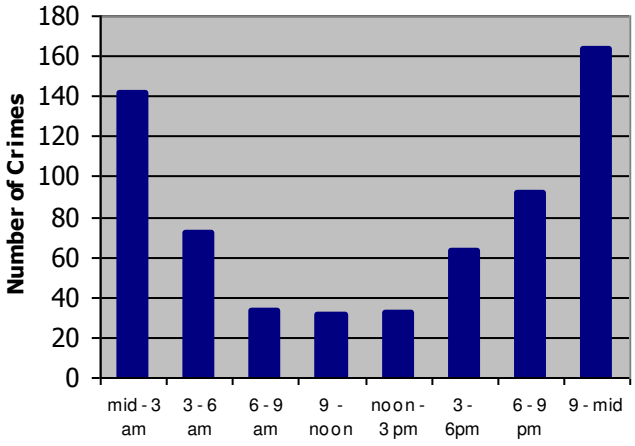


Table 7—Gang-Related Crimes by Time of Day



6. Student and School Data

Data collected from and about students, including school-level data, are an important part of the assessment. These data are useful in the identification of the proportion of youth in the community who claim gang membership or who are at high risk for gang membership. School-level data and information from school staff are vital to rounding out the picture of gang activity in the community. This chapter provides guidance on collecting data on the following:

- Student characteristics and disciplinary actions
- School-aged youths' perceptions of gangs and gang activity (student survey)
- School staff perspectives on gang activity on campus

Prevalence of Gangs in Schools

In the mid-1990s, 28 percent of the national sample of students reported that gangs were present in their schools (Chandler, Chapman, Rand, and Taylor, 1998). This number dropped to 17 percent in 1999 and then increased to 24 percent in 2005, almost the level reported a decade earlier (Dinkes, Cataldi, Kena et al., 2006). Thus respondents to the national survey of students reported a decrease in gang activity in the late 1990s and an increase in the opening years of this century.

Impact of Gangs in Schools

Where they have a substantial community presence, youth gangs are linked with serious delinquency problems in elementary and secondary schools across the United States (Chandler, Chapman, Rand, and Taylor, 1998). This study of data gathered in the School Crime Supplement to the 1995 National Crime Victim Survey documented several examples. First, there is a strong correlation between gang presence in schools and between both guns and availability of drugs in school. Second, higher percentages of students report knowing a student who brought a gun to school when students report gang presence (25 percent) than when gangs are not present (8 percent). In addition, gang presence at a student's school is related to seeing a student with a gun at school: 12 percent report having seen a student with a gun in school when gangs are present versus 3 percent when gangs are not present. Third, students who report that any drugs (marijuana, cocaine, crack, or uppers/downers) are readily available at school are much more likely to report gangs at their schools (35 percent) than those who say that no drugs are available (14 percent). Fourth, the presence of gangs more than doubles the likelihood of violent victimization at school (nearly 8 percent versus 3 percent). The presence of street gangs at school also can be very disruptive to the school environment because gangs may not only create fear among students but also increase the level of violence in school. Gang presence is also an important contributor to overall levels of student victimization at school (Howell and Lynch, 2000).

In the School Crime Supplement to the 2003 National Crime Victimization Survey, students aged 12–18 were asked whether street gangs were present at their schools during the previous six months. In 2003, 21 percent of students reported that there were gangs at their schools (National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005, p. 46). However, no difference was detected between 2001 and 2003 in percentages of students who reported the presence of street gangs, regardless of school location. Of all the students surveyed, students in urban schools were the most likely to report the presence of street gangs at their schools (31 percent), followed by suburban students and rural students, who were the least likely to do so (18 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

Greater security measures have been taken by school administrations in response to the gang problem, but the effectiveness of these approaches is subject to debate (Howell and Lynch, 2000). "The presence of security officers, metal detectors, and security cameras may deter some students from committing acts of violence, but this presence also serves to heighten fear among students and teachers, while increasing the power of some gangs and the perceived need some students have for joining gangs" (Thompkins, 2000, p. 54). It is also important to be aware that school-related gang crime extends beyond the boundaries of school buildings themselves to contexts in which youths congregate before and after school hours; in fact, gang crime begins to escalate very early on school days (Wiebe, Meeker, and Vila, 1999).

School-based risk factors such as poor school performance and poor school attachment are primary factors for eventual gang involvement (Howell and Egley 2005; Kosterman et al., 2005). Recent research also indicates that data gathered from school-aged youth about their perceptions of gangs and gang participation may vary substantially from police data about gangs (Esbensen, 2000). This research data does not negate the truthfulness of police data but simply indicates that different groups within the same community may have different perceptions about gangs and that gangs affect different community members in different ways.

Gathering data about gang activity in schools has historically been difficult, but it is a vital facet of the Assessment Work Group's efforts. The threat of gang crime and violence posed by gang-involved youth is not limited to the streets but also exists in many schools.

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about students, student involvement in gang activities, risk and protective factors, school staff perceptions, the information that will be needed to answer the questions, and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Student and School-Level Data

Questions to Be Answered	Information Needed to Answer	Sources of Information	How to Obtain
1. What are the overall characteristics of each school?	Attendance trends; disciplinary statistics; free/reduced lunch rates; demographics	School or district records and reports to state department of education	Retrieve from existing hard copy or from online
2. What delinquent behaviors are students involved in?	Data on expulsions/suspensions by category and type, school disciplinary records, police reports, data from student survey	School records, staff, administrators, school resource officers, juvenile court statistics, students	School district records, police department records, school district police department records, student survey
3. What are the characteristics of students involved in gangs?	Perceptions of school staff, student survey	School staff in targeted schools, student survey	Focus groups or personal interviews with staff, student survey

4. What issues seem to be contributing to student gang involvement or risk for gang involvement?	Perceptions of school staff, administrators, and school resource officers	School staff in targeted schools	Focus groups or personal interviews with staff members
5. What risk and protective factors are affecting local youth? What are in-school youths' perceptions about gangs?	Student perceptions and experiences	Youth in local schools	Student survey

Student Characteristics and Disciplinary Incidents

Data on student characteristics and disciplinary incidents should be collected at selected schools and grade levels for the past three to five years. The number of schools and grades included in this data should be determined by the Steering Committee. Alternative schools, if applicable, should also be included.

Student Characteristics

Student/school data to be collected include the following:

- Enrollment of school
- Racial composition of school
- Gender composition of school
- Number of students who receive free/reduced-price lunch
- Other critical variables as determined locally

The majority of this information will be collected from the school or school district. In most cases, this data will be accessible on the Internet or on local school district Web sites.

Disciplinary Incidents

Agencies outside the school system, including the juvenile court or police department, may keep information on school-based disciplinary incidents. Many large school districts maintain their own police departments that may keep statistics relating to crime and gang-related incidents in schools. School personnel may believe they are legally forbidden to share certain information about students and school-related incidents. However, certain staff or offices, i.e., law enforcement units affiliated with the school, are permitted to share data that can prove instrumental in completing the picture of a community's gang problem. It should be noted that most schools do not index these disciplinary reports by gang involvement.

Data should be collected on disciplinary incidents by school, and, if possible, the resulting action, such as suspension or expulsion, taken by school staff. These data should be collected on a yearly basis for the same length of time that school characteristics are collected. Disciplinary incident data to collect include the following:

- Type of incident (see list below)

- Gang-related or not gang-related (if available)
- Disciplinary action taken (suspension, expulsion, etc.)

Disciplinary Incident List	
Fighting Hitting/kicking Disobeying school officials Truancy Alcohol/drugs Threats Weapons Harassment Theft	Smoking Pornography Disruption of school/class Cursing Throwing objects Extortion Vandalism/graffiti Other (specify):

After data on student characteristics and disciplinary data are organized, the data should be reported to the Steering Committee, and, if possible, enhanced by using appropriate charts or other formats, such as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2—Sample School Demographic Report

South Park High School							
	1995–96	**1996–97**	**1997–98**	**1998–99**	**1999–00**	**2000–01**	**2001–02**
School performance score	acceptable	low performing	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable	recognized	exemplary
% passing all standardized tests	26.3%	24.4%	51.7%	68.6%	86.2%	90.5%	95.2%
Total population	3,108	2,916	2,760	2,419	2,395	2,215	2,083
Hispanic	2,954	2,761	2,620	2,311	2,301	2,109	1,989
African American	86	81	91	75	67	73	63
White	48	44	29	22	19	24	20
Other	20	30	20	11	8	9	11
Economically disadvantaged	1,186	1,371	2,201	1,866	1,926	1,821	1,807
Limited English proficiency	845	806	781	434	571	451	403
Special education	239	279	292	301	283	274	278
Career and technology education	1,705	1,261	1,191	1,046	1,104	972	865
Bilingual/ESL education	612	501	529	225	230	194	287
Gifted and talented	0	0	0	93	118	153	87
9th	1,364	1,364	1,032	898	1,228	1,160	1,093
10th	685	538	769	581	235	281	257
11th	550	549	535	573	506	426	477
12th	509	465	424	397	426	348	256
Number of graduates	409	354	473	387	425	366	339

Answers to the following questions should be considered:

1. What are the overall demographics of each school?

2. Have any trends emerged (enrollment, racial composition, percentage of students receiving free/reduced-price lunch, others)?
3. What are the trends regarding disciplinary incidents—gang activity, weapons, fighting, or other violent incidents, as well as incidents of a nonviolent nature such as those involving drugs?

Student Survey

The perceptions of students can add a great deal of depth to any assessment. The survey included at the end of this chapter was designed to be used by students between grades 6 and 12. The survey measures their perceptions about gangs and gang participation and gives an overview of specific risk factors that may be affecting the community's youth.

This survey can be used in a variety of ways. It can be conducted universally with all students in several grades. It can also be conducted using a smaller sample of in-school youth—including students in alternative schools. If a local community is unable to overcome the challenges to collecting this information in schools, the survey can be administered in other settings: churches, youth groups, youth-serving agencies, recreation centers, and with youth in placement and/or on probation.

The student survey offers communities two distinct benefits. First, it affords the opportunity to take advantage of prevention science. Delinquency prevention science incorporates the risk- and protective-focused prevention model pioneered in public health research in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases. Risk and protective factors predict increased or decreased probability of developing problem behaviors, such as gang involvement. Risk factors are conditions in the individual or environment that predict an increased likelihood of developing a problem. Protective factors, on the other hand, are conditions in the individual or environment that buffer or moderate the effects of risk factors or increase resistance to them, thus inhibiting the development of problems even in the face of risk exposure. "It is possible now to move to outcome focused prevention, that is, to design systems for risk reduction and protective factor enhancement to achieve specified [delinquency] prevention outcomes" (Hawkins, 1999). For example, a comprehensive Seattle program for children aged 6 to 12 prevented violence, heavy alcohol use, sexual activity, and teen pregnancy by age 18, by reducing shared risks and enhancing protection in the family and school environments (Hawkins et al., 1999). A brief discussion of risk and protective factors can be found in **Appendix A** on page 72.

The second benefit of the student survey is that it produces valuable information that helps determine the seriousness of gang problems and what level of intervention is needed to reduce involvement of active gang members, and helps control the influence and delinquent and criminal activities of gangs. In addition to providing information on the characteristics of gangs in the community, the student survey measures the degree of bonding to gangs—among students who indicate gang membership. In an 11-city student survey that identified nearly a thousand gang members, each level of gang bonding was associated with progressively more frequent involvement in serious and violent delinquency, drug use, and drug trafficking (Esbensen et al., 2001). The survey items measured five levels of gang bonding:

- Level one—Ever involved in a gang
- Level two—Currently a gang member
- Level three—Currently a member <u>of a delinquent gang</u>
- Level four—Currently a member of a delinquent gang <u>that is organized</u>
- Level five—Currently a <u>core</u> member of a delinquent gang that is organized

The student survey can make a significant contribution to each community's assessment of its specific gang problem. Analysis of survey information will make it easier to identify areas or populations that are experiencing high levels of multiple risk factors or low levels of protective factors associated with gang involvement (Pollard et al., 1997). This information will ultimately guide prevention planning and strategy development in the community.

Key factors in administering this survey include:

- Obtaining consent from parents/guardians
- Ensuring that the survey is administered in a consistent fashion
- Protecting the confidentiality of survey data

Obtaining Consent

In many cases, school districts are now required to use active consent to survey youth perceptions and activities. Active consent requires parents and/or guardians to proactively agree to their children's participation in the survey, whereas passive consent requires parents/guardians to proactively opt out of the survey or consent is implied. Obviously, the requirement of active consent for the administration of this survey will result in far fewer students being surveyed.

Survey Administration

Assessment partners and/or volunteers from the Steering Committee can be utilized to administer the survey to students and/or other youths. It is important that the survey be administered in a similar fashion across all sites, classrooms, and locations, and training these staff and/or volunteers is a crucial aspect of effectively administering the survey.

Confidentiality Issues

Because this survey assesses sensitive data such as parent/child relationships, substance use, and gang activities that the youths have observed, it is important that the survey be administered in such a way as to protect the identities of all participants. Furthermore, the survey data should be analyzed only by a partner who has experience in protecting the confidentiality of survey participants.

What the Student Survey Does

This survey is designed to measure the following:

- Identify differences between students who self-report gang membership and those who do not.
- Identify risk factors that may make it more likely that a youth will develop a problem behavior, including joining a gang.
- Identify protective factors that may moderate the effects of risk factors for gang membership or increase resistance to them.
- Identify students' perceptions about gang activity and gang crime.

Conducting the Survey

Surveying all youth in the target grades may be too costly and/or time prohibitive. It is suggested that at least a sample of youth from each school and in each target grade be surveyed. For example, 100 students in each school could be sampled. A consistent sampling strategy is recommended across schools/grade levels at each site.

The student survey can be completed within the normal one-period classroom setting, using a self-administered anonymous questionnaire. Sample consent letters for active and passive consent can be found in **EXHIBIT 6.1** on page 58. The student survey can be found in **EXHIBIT 6.2** on page 60. Information on consent and confidentiality can be found in **EXHIBIT 6.3** on page 69.

Analyzing the Survey

Some of the data that is collected through the student survey is quite straightforward and can be easily analyzed and reported by a proficient analyst. However, some sections of the survey are weighted and cross-tabulated using an item construct dictionary (see **Appendix B** on page 78). The analysis required for the weighting of risk factor data is complex enough to warrant the assistance of a Research Partner at the university or college level.

The data from the survey should be reported to include the following information from the student survey.

Comparison of gang versus nongang students

- Age, race, and gender of total surveyed at each school
- Prevalence/frequency of delinquent behavior by age, race, and gender
- Good/bad things about gangs by age, race, and gender
- Risk/protective factors by age, race, and gender

Students who admit gang membership

- Why they joined a gang by age, race, and gender
- Participation in gang activities by age, race, and gender
- Benefits of gang membership by age, race, and gender
- Disadvantages of gang membership by age, race, and gender

Tables 3 and 4 below provide examples of ways in which these data sets can be reported.

Table 3—Percent of School Population Reporting Gang Involvement

	Yes	No	Total
Male	30% (46)	70% (109)	100% (155)
Female	17% (48)	83% (187)	100% (235)
All	24% (94)	76% (296)	100% (390)
11–14	22% (47)	78% (171)	100% (218)
15–17	31% (41)	69% (93)	100% (134)
18 +	15% (6)	85% (33)	100% (39)
All	24% (94)	76% (297)	100% (391)

Table 4—Antisocial Behaviors Committed at Least Once in the Last 12 Months, as Self-Reported by Gang and Nongang-Involved Respondents			
Behavior	Gang-Involved (N = 95)	Nongang-Involved (N = 298)	Total (N = 393)
Been drunk or high at school	**52% (49)**	**10% (29)**	**18% (78)**
Attacked someone intending to seriously hurt them	**49% (47)**	**12% (37)**	**21% (84)**
Carried a handgun	**40% (38)**	**4% (13)**	**13% (51)**
Sold illegal drugs	**38% (36)**	**3% (9)**	**11% (45)**
Been suspended	**36% (34)**	**14% (41)**	**19% (75)**
Been arrested	**26% (25)**	**5% (14)**	**10% (39)**
Stolen or tried to steal a motor vehicle	**21% (20)**	**3% (9)**	**7% (29)**
Taken a handgun to school	**15% (14)**	**1% (3)**	**4% (17)**

After data from the student survey are organized, answers to the following questions should be addressed:

1. Who admits to involvement in gang activity?
2. How do students who self-report gang membership differ from those who say they are not in a gang?
3. How do school-aged youth perceive gang activity in the school?
4. What specific risk factors are present in students' environments that may lead to gang membership or involvement?
5. What specific protective factors are present?
6. What high-risk behaviors do gang youth engage in? How do they compare with those who do not report gang involvement?

School Staff Perceptions

The experiences and perceptions of school staff can supplement a community's understanding of its local gang problem, since school staff and administrators have contact with a wide variety of students daily.

It is recommended that school personnel be interviewed to provide insight into the nature and prevalence of gang activity in and around the school. Those interviewed should include not only teachers and administrators but others who have different types of contact with students: school resource officers, school health services personnel, counselors/mental health specialists, prevention/intervention project staff, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers.

It should be understood that more than any other agency's staff, school personnel may feel uncomfortable discussing their institution's gang problem. They may feel that they are being disloyal to other staff or school administrators, or that any problems are a sign of personal or institutional failure. Therefore, steps should be taken to promote a comfortable environment and ensure that school staff members can speak candidly. One way to ensure this privacy is through a confidential interview using the interview instrument provided in **Exhibit 6.4** on page 71.

After data from the interviews are organized, data should be displayed in the Assessment Report using appropriate tables, charts, or other formats.

Answers to the following questions should be addressed:

1. Do school personnel believe there is a gang problem in their school? Does this vary according to type of school personnel?
2. What types of problems do gang members present on the school campus?
3. What issues are contributing to gang activity in the school?

Exhibit 6.1
Sample PASSIVE CONSENT Letter

(Student Survey)

Dear (*Parent/Guardian*):

(*Community*) is conducting an assessment of gang activity in the community. As part of this assessment, we are surveying school-aged youth in grades ( ). This survey will gather the opinions of (name of school) youth about their neighborhood and community, including friends, family, and school. We also are surveying different groups in the community such as social service agencies, community leaders, law enforcement agencies, parents, and others about their views on gang activity.

We would like your permission to survey your child, along with his or her classmates. The information your child provides will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone. Because neither your name nor your child's name will appear on the survey, your child's response to any question cannot be attributed to him/her.

Your child's participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Only those children and parents who wish to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part in the survey at any time.

If you have any questions, please contact (name) at (phone number). **If you do <u>not</u> want your child to participate in this survey, please sign the enclosed form and mail it back to _____.**

Thank you very much for helping us.

Enclosure

Exhibit 6.1 (continued)
Sample ACTIVE CONSENT Letter

(Student Survey)

Dear (*Parent/Guardian*):

(*Community*) is conducting an assessment of gang activity in the community. As part of this assessment, we are surveying school-aged youth in grades ( ). This information will gather opinions of (name of school) youth about their neighborhood and community, including friends, family, and school. We also are surveying different groups in the community such as social service agencies, community leaders, law enforcement agencies, parents, and others about their views on gang activity.

We would like your permission to survey your child, along with his or her classmates. The information your child provides will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone. As neither your name nor your child's name will appear on the survey, your child's response to any question cannot be attributed to him/her.

Your child's participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Only those children and parents who wish to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part in the survey at any time.

If you have any questions, please contact (name) at (phone number). Thank you very much for helping us.

Parent or guardian, please check your decision below. Sign and return this form within _____ days.

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in this survey.

_____ I **do not** give permission for my child to participate in this survey.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Date

Exhibit 6.2

Student Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. The survey asks your opinion about a number of things in your life, including your friends, your family, your neighborhood, your community, and your activities.

Your answers to these questions will be CONFIDENTIAL. This means your answers will stay secret. Your name will never be asked. Please DO NOT write your name on this survey.

This survey is completely voluntary. You can skip any question that you do not wish to answer.

Other students have said that this survey is very interesting and they enjoy filling it out. We hope you will also. Be sure to read the instructions below before you begin to answer.

1. **This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers.**
2. **Answer by marking in the answer space and use the closest answer to the truth. If you are not sure what a question means, leave it blank.**
3. **Please follow these instructions carefully.**

   It is best to use a pencil.

   Make heavy marks inside the circles.

   Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change.

   Make no other marking or comments on the answer pages.
4. **Some of the questions have the following format.**

   Please mark the circle next to the word that best describes how you feel about that sentence.

   Example: Pepperoni pizza is one of my favorite foods.

❍ NO! ❍ no ● yes ❍ YES!
Mark "NO!" if you think the statement is definitely not true for you.
Mark "no" if you think the statement is mostly not true for you.
Mark "yes" if you think the statement is mostly true for you.
Mark "YES!" if you think the statement is definitely true for you.

In the example above, the student marked "yes" because he or she thinks the statement is mostly true. (Please mark only one answer.)

Time to Begin

These questions ask for some general information about the people completing the survey. Please mark the response that best describes you.

1) How old are you? Please circle the correct answer.
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 or older

2) What grade are you in? Please circle the correct answer.
6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

3) Are you:
❍ Female ❍ Male

4) Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?
❍ No
❍ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
❍ Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
❍ Yes, Puerto Rican
❍ Yes, Cuban
❍ Other Spanish _____

5) If you are not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, please mark what race you are.
❍ White
❍ Black or African American
❍ American Indian or Alaska Native
❍ Chinese ❍ Japanese
❍ Filipino ❍ Asian Indian
❍ Native Hawaiian ❍ Samoan
❍ Korean ❍ Guamanian or Chamorro
❍ Vietnamese
❍ Other Asian _____
❍ Other Pacific Islander _____
❍ Some other race _____

6) Think of where you live most of the time. Which of the following people live there with you? (Choose all that apply.)
❍ Mother ❍ Grandfather
❍ Stepmother ❍ Uncle
❍ Foster mother ❍ Other adults
❍ Grandmother ❍ Brother(s)
❍ Aunt ❍ Stepbrother(s)
❍ Father ❍ Sister(s)
❍ Stepfather ❍ Stepsister(s)
❍ Foster father ❍ Other children

7) How many brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters, do you have who are older than you? Please circle the correct answer.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

8) How many brothers or sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters, do you have who are younger than you? Please circle the correct answer.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

9) What is the language you use most often at home?
❍ English ❍ Spanish ❍ Another language (_____)

10) What is the highest level of schooling your father completed?
❍ Completed grade school or less
❍ Some high school
❍ Completed high school
❍ Some college
❍ Completed college
❍ Graduate or professional school after college
❍ Don't know
❍ Does not apply

11) What is the highest level of schooling your mother completed?
❍ Completed grade school or less
❍ Some high school
❍ Completed high school
❍ Some college
❍ Completed college
❍ Graduate or professional school after college
❍ Don't know
❍ Does not apply

Continue to the next page

12) Where are you living now?
❍ On a farm
❍ In the country, not on a farm
❍ In a city, town, or suburb

This section asks about your experiences in school.

13) Putting them all together, what were your grades like last year?
❍ Mostly As ❍ Mostly Bs ❍ Mostly Cs
❍ Mostly Ds ❍ Mostly Fs

14) In my school, students have lots of chances to help decide things like class activities and rules.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

15) Teachers ask me to work on special classroom projects.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

16) My teacher(s) notices when I am doing a good job and lets me know about it.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

17) There are lots of chances for students in my school to talk with a teacher one-on-one.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

18) I feel safe at my school.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

19) The school lets my parents know when I have done something well.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

20) My teacher(s) praise me when I work hard in school.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

21) Are your school grades better than the grades of most students in your class?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

22) How often do you feel that the school work you are assigned is meaningful and important?
❍ Almost always ❍ Often ❍ Sometimes
❍ Seldom ❍ Never

23) How interesting are most of your courses to you?
❍ Very interesting ❍ Quite interesting
❍ Fairly interesting ❍ Slightly dull
❍ Very dull

24) How important do you think the things you are learning in school are going to be for your later life?
❍ Very important ❍ Quite important
❍ Fairly important ❍ Slightly important
❍ Not at all important

Now, thinking back over the past year in school, how often did you...

25) Enjoy being in school?
❍ Never ❍ Seldom ❍ Sometimes
❍ Often ❍ Almost always

26) Hate being in school?
❍ Never ❍ Seldom ❍ Sometimes
❍ Often ❍ Almost always

27) Try to do your best work in school?
❍ Never ❍ Seldom ❍ Sometimes
❍ Often ❍ Almost always

Continue to the next page

These questions ask about your feelings and experiences in other parts of your life.

Think of your <u>four best friends</u> (the friends you feel closest to.) In the past year (12 months), how many of your best friends have:

28) Been suspended from school?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

29) Carried a handgun?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

30) Sold illegal drugs?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

31) Stolen or tried to steal a car or motorcycle?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

32) Been arrested?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

33) Dropped out of school?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

34) Been members of a gang?
❍ None ❍ 1 ❍ 2 ❍ 3 ❍ 4

How old were you when you first:

35) Smoked marijuana?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

36) Smoked a cigarette, even just a puff?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

37) Had more than a sip or two of beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin?)
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

38) Began drinking alcoholic beverages regularly, that is, at least once or twice a month?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

39) Got suspended from school?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

40) Got arrested?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

41) Carried a handgun?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

42) Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

43) Belonged to a gang?
❍ Never have ❍ 10 or younger ❍ 11
❍ 12 ❍ 13 ❍ 14
❍ 15 ❍ 16 ❍ 17 or older

How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to:

44) Take a handgun to school?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little bit wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

45) Steal anything worth more than $5?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little bit wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

46) Pick a fight with someone?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little bit wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

47) Attack someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little bit wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

48) Stay away from school all day when their parents think they are at school?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little bit wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

49) It is all right to beat up people if they start the fight.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

50) It is important to be honest with your parents, even if they become upset or you get punished.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

51) I think it is okay to take something without asking if you can get away with it.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

Continue to the next page

How many times have you done the following things?

52) Done what feels good no matter what.
❍ Never ❍ I've done it, but not in the past year
❍ Less than once a month ❍ About once a month
❍ 2 to 3 times a month ❍ Once a week or more

53) Done something dangerous because someone dared you to do it.
❍ Never ❍ I've done it, but not in the past year
❍ Less than once a month ❍ About once a month
❍ 2 to 3 times a month ❍ Once a week or more

54) Done crazy things even if they are a little dangerous.
❍ Never ❍ I've done it, but not in the past year
❍ Less than once a month ❍ About once a month
❍ 2 to 3 times a month ❍ Once a week or more

How many times in the past year (12 months) have you:

55) Been suspended from school?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

56) Carried a handgun?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

57) Sold illegal drugs?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

58) Stolen or tried to steal a motor vehicle such as a car or motorcycle?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

59) Been arrested?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

60) Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

61) Been drunk or high at school?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

62) Taken a handgun to school?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 to 5 times
❍ 6 to 9 times ❍ 10 to 19 times ❍ 20 to 29 times
❍ 30 to 39 times ❍ 40+ times

63) I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

64) Sometimes I will take a risk just for the fun of it.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

65) I sometimes find it exciting to do things for which I might get in trouble.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

66) Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

67) I think sometimes it's okay to cheat at school.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

68) Are there any gangs at your school?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

69) Do any of the students at your school belong to a gang?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

70) What about gangs that don't have members attending your school...have any of those gangs come around your school in the past six months?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

If you answered YES to any of the three previous questions, please answer these questions, otherwise continue on to the next section.

71) How often have gangs been involved in fights, attacks, or violence at your school in the past six months?
❍ Never ❍ Almost every day
❍ Once or twice a month ❍ Don't know
❍ Once or twice a week

Continue to the next page

72) Have gangs been involved in the sale of drugs at your school in the past six months?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

73) Have any gang members brought guns to your school in the past six months?
❍ No ❍ Yes ❍ Don't know

Do the gangs around your school do the following things?

	No	Yes
74) Help out in the community	❍	❍
75) Get in fights with other gangs	❍	❍
76) Provide protection for each other	❍	❍
77) Steal things	❍	❍
78) Rob other people	❍	❍
79) Steal cars	❍	❍
80) Sell marijuana	❍	❍
81) Sell other illegal drugs	❍	❍
82) Damage or destroy property	❍	❍

The next section asks about your experiences with gangs. (A "crew" or a "posse" is considered a gang.) If you have NEVER been in a gang, please skip to the next section.

83) Have you ever belonged to a gang?
❍ No ❍ Yes

84) If you have ever belonged to a gang, did that gang have a name?
❍ No ❍ Yes

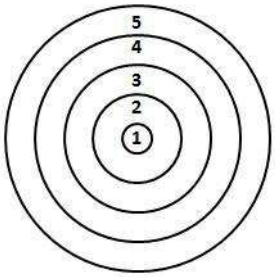
85) Are you a gang member now?
❍ No ❍ Yes

86) How many members are there in your gang?
❍ Not in a gang ❍ 11 to 20
❍ 1 to 5 ❍ 21 to 30
❍ 6 to 10 ❍ More than 30

87) How many boys belong to your gang?
❍ No boys ❍ 11 to 20
❍ 1 to 5 ❍ 21 to 30
❍ 6 to 10 ❍ More than 30

88) How many girls belong to your gang?
❍ No girls ❍ 11 to 20
❍ 1 to 5 ❍ 21 to 30
❍ 6 to 10 ❍ More than 30

89) If you belong to a gang, suppose the circle below represents your gang. How far from the center of the gang are you? (circle the number that best describes your place in the gang)



If you are in a gang, do the following describe your gang?

	No	Yes
90) You can join before age 13.	❍	❍
91) There are initiation rites.	❍	❍
92) The gang has established leaders.	❍	❍
93) The gang has regular meetings.	❍	❍
94) The gang has specific rules or codes.	❍	❍
95) Gang members have specific roles.	❍	❍
96) There are roles for each age group.	❍	❍
97) The gang has symbols or colors.	❍	❍
98) There are specific roles for girls.	❍	❍

99) Why did you join the gang? Mark all that apply.
❍ For fun
❍ For protection
❍ A friend was in the gang
❍ A brother or sister was in the gang
❍ I was forced to join
❍ To get respect
❍ For money
❍ To fit in better
❍ Other (specify)_____
❍ Not in a gang

Continue to the next page

If you are in a gang, does your gang do the following things?

	No	Yes
100) Help out in the community	❍	❍
101) Get in fights with other gangs	❍	❍
102) Provide protection for each other	❍	❍
103) Steal things	❍	❍
104) Rob other people	❍	❍
105) Steal cars	❍	❍
106) Sell marijuana	❍	❍
107) Sell other illegal drugs	❍	❍
108) Damage or destroy property	❍	❍

The next questions ask about the neighborhood and community where you live.

109) If you wanted to get some beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin), how easy would it be for you to get some?
❍ Very hard ❍ Sort of hard
❍ Sort of easy ❍ Very easy

110) If you wanted to get some cigarettes, how easy would it be for you to get some?
❍ Very hard ❍ Sort of hard
❍ Sort of easy ❍ Very easy

111) If you wanted to get a drug like cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines, how easy would it be for you to get some?
❍ Very hard ❍ Sort of hard
❍ Sort of easy ❍ Very easy

112) If you wanted to get a handgun, how easy would it be for you to get one?
❍ Very hard ❍ Sort of hard
❍ Sort of easy ❍ Very easy

113) If you wanted to get some marijuana, how easy would it be for you to get some?
❍ Very hard ❍ Sort of hard
❍ Sort of easy ❍ Very easy

114) If a kid smoked marijuana in your neighborhood, would he or she be caught by the police?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

115) If a kid drank some beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin) in your neighborhood, would he or she be caught by the police?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

116) If a kid carried a handgun in your neighborhood, would he or she be caught by the police?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

How wrong would most adults in your neighborhood think it was for kids your age to:

117) Use marijuana
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

118) Drink alcohol
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

119) Smoke cigarettes
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

About how many adults (over 21) have you known personally who in the past year have:

120) Used marijuana, crack, cocaine, or other drugs?
❍ None ❍ 1 adult ❍ 2 adults
❍ 3 or 4 adults ❍ 5 or more adults

121) Sold or dealt drugs?
❍ None ❍ 1 adult ❍ 2 adults
❍ 3 or 4 adults ❍ 5 or more adults

122) Done other things that could get them in trouble with the police like stealing, selling stolen goods, mugging, or assaulting others, etc.
❍ None ❍ 1 adult ❍ 2 adults
❍ 3 or 4 adults ❍ 5 or more adults

123) Gotten drunk or high?
❍ None ❍ 1 adult ❍ 2 adults
❍ 3 or 4 adults ❍ 5 or more adults

124) People move in and out of my neighborhood a lot
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

125) If I had to move, I would miss the neighborhood where I now live.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

126) My neighbors notice when I am doing a good job and let me know.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

Continue to the next page

127) I like my neighborhood.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

128) There are lots of adults in my neighborhood I could talk to about something important.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

How much do each of the following statements describe your neighborhood.

129) Crime and/or drug selling
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

130) Fights
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

131) Lots of empty or abandoned buildings
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

132) Lots of graffiti
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

133) How many times have you changed homes since kindergarten?
❍ Never ❍ 1 or 2 times ❍ 3 or 4 times
❍ 5 or 6 times ❍ 7 or more times

134) There are people in my neighborhood who are proud of me when I do something well.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

Which of the following activities for people your age are available in your community?

135) Sports teams	❍ No	❍ Yes
136) Scouting	❍ No	❍ Yes
137) Boys & girls clubs	❍ No	❍ Yes
138) 4-H clubs	❍ No	❍ Yes
139) Service clubs	❍ No	❍ Yes

140) Have you changed schools (including changing from elementary to middle and middle to high school) in the past year?
❍ No ❍ Yes

141) How many times have you changed schools (including changing from elementary to middle and middle to high school) since kindergarten?
❍ Never ❍1 or 2 times ❍ 3 or 4 times
❍ 5 or 6 times ❍7 or more times

142) Have you changed homes in the past year (the last 12 months)?
❍ No ❍ Yes

143) I feel safe in my neighborhood.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

144) I'd like to get out of my neighborhood.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

145) There are people in my neighborhood who encourage me to do my best.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

The next few questions ask about your family.

How wrong do your parents feel it would be for <u>you</u> to:

146) Steal anything worth more than $5?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

147) Draw graffiti, or write things or draw pictures on buildings or other property (without the owner's permission?)
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

148) Pick a fight with someone?
❍ Very wrong ❍ Wrong
❍ A little wrong ❍ Not wrong at all

Have any of your brothers or sisters ever:

149) Drunk beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey or gin?)
❍ No ❍ Yes
❍ I don't have any brothers or sisters

150) Smoked marijuana?
❍ No ❍ Yes
❍ I don't have any brothers or sisters

151) Smoked cigarettes?
❍ No ❍ Yes
❍ I don't have any brothers or sisters

152) Taken a handgun to school?
❍ No ❍ Yes
❍ I don't have any brothers or sisters

153) Been suspended or expelled from school?
❍ No ❍ Yes
❍ I don't have any brothers or sisters

Continue to the next page

154) The rules in my family are clear.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

155) Has anyone in your family ever had a severe alcohol or drug problem?
❍ No ❍ Yes

156) People in my family often insult or yell at each other.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

157) When I am not at home, one of my parents knows where I am and who I am with.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

158) We argue about the same things in my family over and over.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

159) If you drank some beer, wine, or liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin) without your parents' permission, would you be caught by your parents?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

160) My family has clear rules about alcohol and drug use.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

161) If you carried a handgun without your parents' permission, would you be caught by your parents?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

162) If you skipped school, would you be caught by your parents?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

163) My parents notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it.
❍ Never or almost never
❍ Sometimes
❍ Often
❍ All the time

164) Do you feel very close to your mother?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

165) Do you share your thoughts and feelings with your mother?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

166) My parents ask me what I think before most family decisions affecting me are made.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

167) How often do your parents tell you they're proud of you for something you've done?
❍ Never or almost never
❍ Sometimes
❍ Often
❍ All the time

168) Do you share your thoughts and feelings with your father?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

169) Do you enjoy spending time with your mother?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

170) Do you enjoy spending time with your father?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

171) If I had a personal problem, I could ask my mom or dad for help.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

172) Do you feel very close to your father?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

173) My parents give me lots of chances to do fun things with them.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

174) My parents ask if I've gotten my homework done.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

175) People in my family have serious arguments.
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

176) Would your parents know if you did not come home on time?
❍ NO! ❍ no ❍ yes ❍ YES!

End of Survey

Exhibit 6.3
Consent and Confidentiality

When the student surveys are conducted, either active or passive consent of the parent or guardian should be sought. As difficult as it may be to get parents to return consent forms, the effort must be made. Schools or districts may have different policies and preferences. Passive consent generally yields 90 to 100 percent participation rates. Active consent yields about 40 to 50 percent, and about 10 percent simply never return the form. Check state, local, and school regulations to determine whether active consent is required or whether it is permissible to use passive consent. Please refer to **Exhibit 6.1** on page 58 for sample active and passive consent letters.

If seeking active consent, parents or guardians should receive a letter explaining the survey and asking permission for students to fill out the questionnaire. A parent/guardian must return the signed letter indicating that permission to participate is granted before his or her student may complete the survey.

For passive consent, parents or guardians should receive a letter explaining the survey and asking permission for their students to fill out the questionnaire. Each parent/guardian should be given the option to return the signed letter indicating refusal to participate; otherwise, permission is to be considered granted for the child to participate in the survey.

The consent form should be written to be understandable to the person who signs it. Use commonly understood words, not jargon. Consider that languages other than English may be spoken in the home, and that consent forms may have to be translated into languages other than English. Participation cannot be coerced and the consent form must state that participation is voluntary and may cease at any time.

Before the student survey is conducted, school personnel, including teachers and administrators, should be consulted well in advance. School districts and individual schools may have varying policies regarding nonschool-related surveys, such as the time of day they can be administered or the location. School personnel also may have to provide alternative arrangements for students who are not participating in the survey.

Some of the questions on the student survey may be of a sensitive nature (e.g., drug use, weapons possession, gang activities, family life), which argues that the protection of participants' identities is a key concern.

Two approaches satisfy this requirement—anonymity and confidentiality—although the two often are confused. A respondent may be considered anonymous when the interviewer or researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. The student survey should be considered anonymous; i.e., individual students cannot and will not be identified. In a confidential survey, the interviewer or researcher is able to identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so. To guarantee confidentiality or anonymity, all names, addresses, or other personal identification should be removed from survey or interview forms.

The student survey will provide aggregate data from each school—individual students cannot be identified. However, the Assessment Work Group will likely face the confidentiality issue. The disclosure of certain education information regarding youth under the age of 18 is safeguarded by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Educators typically approach participation in student surveys with caution because they have legitimate concerns about the privacy of their students and the disclosure of certain kinds of information.

Exhibit 6.3 (continued)

FERPA protects the privacy interests of students and parents only with respect to education records and does not apply to student surveys that do not contain personally identifiable information (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1997). Please refer to "Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs."

FERPA allows an exemption, however, to provide student information from the school's law enforcement unit records. Under FERPA, schools may disclose information from "law enforcement unit records" to anyone—federal, state, or local law enforcement authorities, social service agencies, or even the media—without the consent of the parent or eligible student. A "law enforcement unit" is an individual, office, department, division, or other component of a school or school district—such as a unit of commissioned police officers or noncommissioned security guards—that is officially authorized or designated by the school district to (1) enforce federal, state, or local law, or (2) maintain the physical security and safety of schools in the district. The Family Policy Compliance Office, which administers FERPA, is available at (202) 260-3887 to answer further questions regarding FERPA.

Exhibit 6.4
School Staff Perceptions Interview

1. Do you believe gangs are a problem in your school?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If so, what signs do you see that lead you to believe that gang members are present in the school?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. When were you first aware of gang problems in your school?_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What types of problems do gang members present in or around the school?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. When and where are the gang activities occurring most frequently in and around the school (time of day, classroom, outside classroom, etc.)?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. What issues do you think contribute to gang activity?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Do you believe gang activity is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same level in your school as in previous years? Why?

❍ Increasing
❍ Decreasing
❍ Staying the same

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix A
Risk and Protective Factors

Risk Factors

For many years, researchers have been studying the factors that seem to put young people at higher risk to join gangs. Some factors—whether they are preexisting personality traits, family characteristics/behaviors, or community conditions—weaken young people's resistance to gangs. In essence, if one thinks of a gang as a disease, these factors tend to weaken an individual's "immune system," making it less likely that the individual will successfully transition from childhood to adulthood without engaging in antisocial behaviors.

These risk factors are negative barriers, keeping youth from succeeding in more positive realms, holding them back from the other kinds of opportunities that other youth enjoy, or pushing youth beyond the mainstream culture and marginalizing them. These risk factors are broken pieces of a youth's life that he/she will seek to repair or replace elsewhere, if they cannot be offset through normal methods. The risk factors also represent outside influences (home, school, peer, community) that may normalize gang culture in the mind of the youth.

Drs. James Howell and Arlen Egley, Jr., noted that:

> "Children who are on a trajectory of worsening antisocial behavior are more likely to join gangs during adolescence and they tend to have more problems than non-gang members. Gang entry might be thought of as the next developmental step in escalating delinquent behavior. Future gang members not only evidence a large number of risk factors, they are likely to show risk factors in multiple developmental domains, including community or neighborhood, family problems, school problems, delinquent peer influence, and individual characteristics" ("Moving Risk Factors Into Developmental Theories of Gang Membership," 2005).

These factors are divided into domains that affect youth, including individual characteristics, family characteristics, characteristics of the school the individual attends and/or the individual's relationship with the school and education, characteristics of the community in which the individual resides, and characteristics of that individual's peer group.

Predominant risk factors for gang involvement (i.e., factors validated in more than one study site) are:

- Family management
- School problems
- Association with delinquent peers
- General delinquency involvement
- Alcohol or drug use
- Association with delinquent peers

These factors do not mean that an individual who experiences these conditions will automatically join a gang or act out in antisocial ways, but they help to predict the likelihood of gang joining. The following risk-factor discussion is drawn from "Moving Risk Factors Into Developmental Theories of Gang Membership" (Howell and Egley, 2005).

Individual Risk Factors

Individual risk factors are personality traits and behaviors that predict the likelihood that a youth will join a gang. Howell and Egley note that individual risk factors are significant:

> "Studies have identified more individual risk factors for gang membership than in any other domain. Early involvement in delinquency and violent behavior in the Seattle study and delinquency involvement in early adolescence in the Rochester study predicted gang membership. Both of these studies also show that the risk of gang involvement is elevated for youngsters who use alcohol/drugs and are involved in other forms of delinquency and who hold antisocial/delinquent beliefs. Experiencing life stressors is another important individual risk factor at the early adolescence stage."

Several studies have noted a few consistent individual risk factors specific to joining a gang:

- General delinquency involvement
- Violence involvement
- Antisocial or delinquent beliefs
- Alcohol or drug use
- Life stressors

Family Risk Factors

Family issues and the degree of socialization that young people receive in their families play a significant role in determining risk to join a gang. Attitudes and behaviors of parents are extremely influential in their children's decisions about gangs, as are the strength of the bond and relationship between parent and child. These factors can be either internal or external and are frequently interconnected. For instance, family poverty is a risk factor that is correlated to gang joining, as is a home where divorce or separation has occurred. Because families with divorced single parents are more likely than other family types to live in poverty, a child who has one of these risk factors also may be exposed to other risk factors. Families who are in poverty are also more likely to live in low-income, high-crime sections of the community. Such families also may experience internal stressors, such as family conflict, as a result of these other factors.

The internal values of the family are also a consideration. Children living in homes with siblings or close relatives who are involved in gangs are much more likely to join a gang. The parents' attitudes and performance of parental roles also play an important part. In families where parents express positive attitudes towards violence and negative attitudes towards educational success, and where there is a low level of parental supervision and monitoring, youth are more predisposed to joining a gang.

Howell and Egley (2005) distinguish between structural and process risk factors in families:

> "Family-level factors can be divided into two groups—structural variables and social process variables. Nonintact family (not living with both biological parents) is a key structural variable, and family management problems typically characterize family process variables. However, structural variables are often mediated by family process variables and, thus, are typically only indirectly associated with gang membership. For example, structural adversity affects such factors as parenting deficits and the development of strong family bonds."

School Risk Factors

School risk factors relate to the individual's behavior and performance in school, along with the school's effectiveness in engaging young people, addressing students' educational needs, and providing students with role models. Students who have low levels of school achievement and are classified as having learning disabilities are at higher risk for gang affiliation than are other students. Low academic aspirations on the part of the student and parent, low commitment to school, and general academic failure (starting as early as elementary school) are also important factors in predicting gang affiliation. These sorts of risk factors also tend to cluster within the same settings. Thus, students with learning disabilities or low academic aspirations are likely to be negatively labeled by teachers and poorly attached to the school. In other instances, students may attend low-performing schools in areas of the community where poverty is the norm and crime is high. Further, in these areas, students may experience or fear victimization at school, another risk factor for gang involvement.

Schools, regardless of the area in which they are located, can take measures to ensure that students are more likely to succeed and to counter possible risk factors to which students may be exposed.

Community Risk Factors

Unsurprisingly, gangs tend to be more prevalent in high-crime areas of the community, where poverty and social disorganization are widespread, opportunities are fewer, and antisocial acts (such as drug use and sale) are common. These sorts of community conditions can cause feelings of vulnerability among youth (such as fear of victimization or perceptions of being unsafe). Antisocial attitudinal norms within the community—while being favorable to gangs, crime, violence, and drugs—also tend to influence local youth to view gangs more positively. In combination, these factors lead to the creation and long-term viability of gangs. Howell and Egley (2005) note:

> "Community or neighborhood risk factors that have been shown to predict gang membership in early adolescence include availability/perceived access to drugs, neighborhood youth in trouble, feeling unsafe in the neighborhood, and low neighborhood attachment. Other important neighborhood risk factors consist of high community arrest rates, high drug use, and neighborhood disorganization. Availability of firearms may also be an important community variable."

Peer Risk Factors

During the adolescent years, a youth's relationship to his peers becomes extremely important and is linked to self-identity. Youth who associate with gang-involved or antisocial/delinquent peers are much more likely to join a gang. Youth who feel ostracized because of their race or ethnicity, or who are struggling with personal identity, also may "try on" different peer groups to find one that fits, including gangs.

> "Associates" of gang members are also part and parcel of a community's gang problem because of their active involvement in delinquency (Curry, Decker, and Egley, 2002).

Researchers have found that the vast majority of youth who join gangs stay in the gang less than one year. Those who remain in the gang longer may share common personality and behavior traits, including aggressiveness, oppositional behavior, inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and maintaining relationships with antisocial peers.

Key Risk Factor Findings

Recent youth gang research has produced three seminal findings with respect to the effect of risk factors on the likelihood of gang membership. First, risk factors for gang membership span all five of the risk factor domains (family, peer group, school, individual characteristics, and community conditions). Second, risk factors have a cumulative effect. The greater the number of risk factors experienced by the youth, the greater the likelihood of gang involvement. For example, youth in Seattle possessing seven or more risk factors were 13 times more likely to join a gang than were children with no risk factor indicators or only one risk factor indicator. Third, the presence of risk factors in multiple developmental domains appears to further enhance the likelihood of gang membership. For youth in the Rochester study (Thornberry et al., 2003), a majority (61 percent) of the boys and 40 percent of the girls who exhibited elevated risk in all domains self-reported gang membership. In contrast, only one-third of the boys and one-fourth of the girls who experienced risk in a simple majority of the domains joined a gang.

Children who are on a trajectory of worsening antisocial behavior are more likely to join gangs during adolescence, and they tend to have more risk factors than ordinary delinquents (Howell and Egley, 2005). Gang entry might be thought of as the next developmental step in escalating delinquent behavior. Future gang members not only evidence a large number of risk factors, they are likely to show risk factors in multiple developmental domains, including community or neighborhood, family problems, school problems, delinquent peer influence, and individual characteristics.

The table below breaks out risk factors by domain: community, family, school, peer group, and individual.

Risk Factors for Gang Membership	
Individual	
– General delinquency involvement – Antisocial/delinquent beliefs – Early onset of aggression/violence – Hyperactive (impulsive, attention problems) – Authority conflict (troublesome/dishonest/daring/ stubborn/disruptive/conduct disorders) – Early initiation of violent behavior – Poor refusal skills – Substance use (especially marijuana and alcohol)	– Physical violence or aggression – Violent victimization± – Mental health problem, or conduct disorders (disruptive, antisocial) † – Illegal gun ownership/carrying – Early dating/sexual activity/fatherhood – Antisocial or delinquent beliefs – Alcohol/drug use – Life stressors‡ – Makes excuses for delinquent behavior (neutralization)
Family	
– Broken home/changes in caretaker – Poverty /low family socioeconomic status – Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement – Delinquent/gang-related siblings – Having a young mother – Low attachment to child – Low parent education	– Child maltreatment (abuse or neglect) – Family transitions (change in parent figures) – Sibling antisocial behavior – Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring, and child management) – Family poverty – Parent proviolent attitudes

School	
– Low achievement in elementary school – Frequent truancy/absences/suspensions/expelled from school – Identified as learning disabled – Low school attachment/bonding/motivation/commitment to school – Poor school attitude/motivation/ performance/school failure	– Poorly organized and functioning schools/inadequate school climate/negative labeling by teachers – Low academic aspirations – Low attachment to teachers – Low parental college expectations for child – Low math achievement test score (males)
Community	
– Residence in a disadvantaged or disorganized neighborhood – Availability or perceived ready access to drugs – Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood	– Low neighborhood attachment – High-crime neighborhood – Availability of firearms – Neighborhood youth in trouble
Peer	
– Association with antisocial/aggressive/delinquent peers/high peer delinquency	– Gang-involved peers/relatives

†Conduct disorder symptoms included bullying, fighting, lying, cruelty toward animals, attacking people, running away from home, fire setting, theft, truancy, and vandalism.

‡These consist of failing a course at school, being suspended or expelled from school, breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend, having a big fight or problem with a friend, or the death of someone close.

±Need for protection is a major reason gang members give when asked why they join.

Protective Factors

Other research supports that, along with risk factors, protective factors, or certain conditions in the individual or environment, can reduce the effects of risk factors (Pollard et al., 1997; Howell and Hawkins, 1998). Delinquency prevention science incorporates the risk- and protective-focused prevention model pioneered in public health research, in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

Risk factors are conditions in the individual or environment that predict an increased likelihood of developing a problem. Protective factors, on the other hand, are conditions in the individual or environment that buffer or moderate the effects of risk factors or increase resistance to them, and thus inhibit the development of problems even in the face of risk exposure.

"It is possible now to move to outcome focused prevention, that is, to design systems for risk reduction and protective factor enhancement to achieve specified [delinquency] prevention outcomes" (Hawkins, 1999). For example, a comprehensive Seattle program for children aged 6 to 12 prevented violence, heavy alcohol use, sexual activity, and teen pregnancy by age 18, by reducing shared risks and enhancing protection in the family and school environments (Hawkins et al., 1999).

Appendix B

Item-Construct Dictionary and Associated Scales
for the Student Survey

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHICS

How old are you? 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 or older

What grade are you in? 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Are you: Female Male

What do you consider yourself to be? (Choose one best answer.)

White, not of Hispanic Origin

Black or African American

American Indian/Native American, Eskimo or Aleut

Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

Mexican American	Chicano
Mexican	Puerto Rican
Cuban	Central or South American
Other Spanish	

Asian or Pacific Islander

Chinese	Japanese
Filipino	Asian Indian
Hawaiian	Samoan
Korean	Guamanian
Vietnamese	Cambodian
Other Asian or Pacific Islander	

Other (Please specify _____)

Think of where you live most of the time. Which of the following people live there with you? (Choose all that apply.)

Mother	Grandfather
Stepmother	Uncle
Foster Mother	Other adults
Grandmother	Brother(s)
Aunt	Stepbrother(s)
Father	Sister(s)
Stepfather	Stepsister(s)
Foster Father	Other children

How many brothers and sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters, do you have that are older than you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

How many brothers or sisters, including stepbrothers and stepsisters, do you have that are younger than you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

What is the language you use most often at home? English Spanish Another Language

What is the highest level of schooling your father completed?

Completed grade school or less
Some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Graduate or professional school after college
Don't know
Does not apply

What is the highest level of schooling your mother completed?

Completed grade school or less
Some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Graduate or professional school after college
Don't know
Does not apply

Where are you living now?

On a farm
In the country, not on a farm
In a city, town, or suburb

SECTION 2 – RISK/PROTECTIVE FACTOR DATA

COMMUNITY: Low Neighborhood Attachment (Risk Factor)

Q-144 I'd like to get out of my neighborhood.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-127 I like my neighborhood.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-125 If I had to move, I would miss the neighborhood I now live in.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

COMMUNITY: Community Disorganization (Risk Factor)

How much do each of the following statements describe your neighborhood:

Q-129 Crime and/or drug selling.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-130 Fights.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-131 Lots of empty or abandoned buildings.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-132 Lots of graffiti.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-143 I feel safe in my neighborhood.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

COMMUNITY: Personal Transitions and Mobility (Risk Factor)

Q-142 Have you changed homes in the past year (the last 12 months)?			NO	YES	
Q-133 How many times have you changed homes since kindergarten?	Never	1 or 2 times	3 or 4 times	5 or 6 times	7 or more times
Q-140 Have you changed schools in the past year?			NO	YES	
Q-141 How many times have you changed schools since kindergarten?	Never	1 or 2 times	3 or 4 times	5 or 6 times	7 or more times

COMMUNITY: Community Transitions and Mobility (Risk Factor)

Q-124 People move in and out of my neighborhood a lot.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

COMMUNITY: Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime – (Risk Factor)

How wrong would most adults in your neighborhood think it was for kids your age:

Q-117 To use marijuana.	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-118 To drink alcohol.	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-119 To smoke cigarettes.	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All

Q-115 If a kid drank some beer, wine or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin) in your neighborhood would he or she be caught by the police?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-114 If a kid smoked marijuana in your neighborhood would he or she be caught by the police?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-116 If a kid carried a handgun in your neighborhood would he or she be caught by the police?	NO!	no	yes	YES!

About how many adults have you known personally who in the past year have:

Q-120 Used marijuana, crack, cocaine, or other drugs?	None	1 adult	2 adults	3 or 4 adults	5 or more adults
Q-121 Sold or dealt drugs?	None	1 adult	2 adults	3 or 4 adults	5 or more adults
Q-122 Done other things that could get them in trouble with the police like stealing, selling stolen goods, mugging or assaulting others, etc.	None	1 adult	2 adults	3 or 4 adults	5 or more adults
Q-123 Gotten drunk or high?	None	1 adult	2 adults	3 or 4 adults	5 or more adults

COMMUNITY: Perceived Availability of Drugs & Handguns (Risk Factor)

Q-109 If you wanted to get some beer, wine or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin), how easy would it be for you to get some?	Very Hard	Sort of Hard	Sort of Easy	Very Easy
Q-110 If you wanted to get some cigarettes, how easy would it be for you to get some?	Very Hard	Sort of Hard	Sort of Easy	Very Easy
Q-113 If you wanted to get some marijuana, how easy would it be for you to get some?	Very Hard	Sort of Hard	Sort of Easy	Very Easy
Q-111 If you wanted to get a drug like cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines, how easy would it be for you to get some?	Very Hard	Sort of Hard	Sort of Easy	Very Easy
Q-112 If you wanted to get a handgun, how easy would it be for you to get one?	Very Hard	Sort of Hard	Sort of Easy	Very Easy

COMMUNITY: Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-128 There are lots of adults in my neighborhood I could talk to about something important.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

Which of the following activities for people your age are available in your community?

Q-135 Sports teams.	Yes	No
Q-136 Scouting.	Yes	No
Q-137 Boys & Girls Clubs	Yes	No
Q-138 4-H clubs	Yes	No
Q-139 Service clubs	Yes	No

COMMUNITY: Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-125 My neighbors notice when I am doing a good job and let me know.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-145 There are people in my neighborhood who encourage me to do my best.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-134 There are people in my neighborhood who are proud of me when I do something well.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

FAMILY: Poor Family Supervision (Risk Factor)

Q-174 My parents ask if I've gotten my homework done.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-176 Would your parents know if you did not come home on time?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-157 When I am not at home, one of my parents knows where I am and who I am with.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-154 The rules in my family are clear.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-160 My family has clear rules about alcohol and drug use.				

FAMILY: Poor Family Discipline (Risk Factor)

Q-159 If you drank some beer or wine or liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin) without your parents' permission, would you be caught by your parents?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-162 If you skipped school would you be caught by your parents?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-161 If you carried a handgun without your parents' permission, would you be caught by your parents?	NO!	no	yes	YES!

FAMILY: Family Conflict (Risk Factor)

Q-156 People in my family often insult or yell at each other.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-175 People in my family have serious arguments.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-158 We argue about the same things in my family over and over.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

FAMILY: Family History of Antisocial Behavior (Risk Factor)

Q-155 Has anyone in your family ever had a severe alcohol or drug problem?	No	Yes	
Have any of your brothers or sisters ever:			
Q-149 Drunk beer, wine or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey or gin)?	No	Yes	I Don't Have Any Brothers or Sisters
Q-150 Smoked marijuana?	No	Yes	I Don't Have Any Brothers or Sisters
Q-151 Smoked cigarettes?	No	Yes	I Don't Have Any Brothers or Sisters
Q-152 Taken a handgun to school?	No	Yes	I Don't Have Any Brothers or Sisters
Q-153 Been suspended or expelled from school?	No	Yes	I Don't Have Any Brothers or Sisters

FAMILY: Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behavior (Risk Factor)

How wrong do your parents feel it would be for you to:

Q-146 Steal anything worth more than $5?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-147 Draw graffiti, or write things or draw pictures on buildings or other property (without the owner's permission)?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-148 Pick a fight with someone?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All

FAMILY – Family Opportunities for Positive Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-166 My parents ask me what I think before most family decisions affecting me are made.	Never or almost Never		Sometimes	Often	All the Time
Q-173 My parents give me lots of chances to do fun things with them.	NO!	no	yes	YES!	

FAMILY – Family Rewards for Positive Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-163 My parents notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it.	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
Q-167 How often do your parents tell you they're proud of you for something you've done?	Never or Almost never		Sometimes	Often	All the Time

FAMILY – Family Attachment (Protective Factor)

Q-164 Do you feel very close to your mother?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-165 Do you share your thoughts and feelings with your mother?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-168 Do you share your thoughts and feelings with your father?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-169 Do you enjoy spending time with your mother?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-170 Do you enjoy spending time with your father?	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-171 If I had a personal problem, I could ask my mom or dad for help.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-172 Do you feel very close to your father?	NO!	no	yes	YES!

SCHOOL: Academic Failure (Risk Factor)

Q-13 Putting them all together, what were your grades like last year?	Mostly A's	Mostly B's	Mostly C's	Mostly D's	Mostly F's
Q-21 Are your school grades better than the grades of most students in your class?	NO!	no	yes	YES!	

SCHOOL: Little Commitment to School (Risk Factor)

Q-22 How often do you feel that the school work you are assigned is meaningful and important?	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Q-23 How interesting are most of your courses to you?	Very Interesting	Quite Interesting	Fairly Interesting	Slightly Dull	Very Dull
Q-24 How important do you think the things you are learning in school are going to be for your later life?	Very Important	Quite Important	Fairly Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important
Now, thinking back over the past year in school, how often did you...					
Q-25 Enjoy being in school?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Q-26 Hate being in school?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Q-27 Try to do your best work in school?	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always

SCHOOL: School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-14 In my school, students have lots of chances to help decide things like class activities and rules.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-15 Teachers ask me to work on special classroom projects.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-17 There are lots of chances for students in my school to talk with a teacher one-on-one	NO!	no	yes	YES!

Q-18 I feel safe in my school.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

SCHOOL: School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (Protective Factor)

Q-16 My teacher(s) notices when I am doing a good job and lets me know about it.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-19 The school lets my parents know when I have done something well.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-20 My teacher praises me when I work hard in school.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

PEER-INDIVIDUAL: Early Initiation of Problem Behavior (Risk Factor)

How old were you when you first:

Q-35 Smoked marijuana?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-36 Smoked a cigarette, even just a puff?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-37 Had more than a sip or two of beer, wine or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or gin)?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-38 Began drinking alcoholic beverages regularly, that is, at least once or twice a month?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-39 Got suspended from school?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-40 Got arrested?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-41 Carried a handgun?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older
Q-42 Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older

PEER-INDIVIDUAL: Impulsiveness (Risk Factor)

Q-63 I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-64 Sometimes I will take a risk just for the fun of it.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-65 I sometimes find it exciting to do things for which I might get in trouble.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-66 Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security.	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-67 I think sometimes it’s okay to cheat at school.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

PEER-INDIVIDUAL: Favorable Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior (Risk Factor)

How wrong do you think it is for someone your age to:

Q-44 Take a handgun to school?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-45 Steal anything worth more than $5?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-46 Pick a fight with someone?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-47 Attack someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong at All
Q-48 Stay away from school all day when their parents think they are at school?	Very Wrong	Wrong	A Little Bit Wrong	Not Wrong At All
Q-49 It is all right to beat up people if they start the fight	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-50 It is important to be honest with your parents, even if they become upset or you get punished	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Q-51 I think it is okay to take something without asking if you can get away with it.	NO!	no	yes	YES!

PEER-INDIVIDUAL: Interaction with Antisocial Peers (Risk Factor)

Think of your <u>four best friends</u> (the friends you feel closest to). In the past year (12 months), how many of your best friends have:

Q-28 Been suspended from school?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-29 Carried a handgun?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-30 Sold illegal drugs?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-31 Stolen or tried to steal a motor vehicle such as a car or motorcycle?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-32 Been arrested?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-33 Dropped out of school?	None	1	2	3	4
Q-34 Been members of a gang?	None	1	2	3	4

PEER-INDIVIDUAL: Sensation Seeking (Risk Factor)

How many times have you done the following things?

Q-52 Done what feels good no matter what.

Never	I've done it, but not in the past year	Less than once a month	About once a month	2 or 3 times a month	Once a week or more

Q-53 Done something dangerous because someone dared you to do it.

Never I've done it, but not in the past year Less than once a month About once a month 2 or 3 times a month Once a week or more

Q-54 Done crazy things even if they are a little dangerous.

Never I've done it, but not in the past year Less than once a month About once a month 2 or 3 times a month Once a week or more

SECTION 3: SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY

Q-55 Been suspended from school?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-56 Carried a handgun?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-57 Sold illegal drugs?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-58 Stolen or tried to steal a motor vehicle such as a car or motorcycle?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-59 Been arrested?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-60 Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-61Been drunk or high at school?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times
Q-62 Taken a handgun to school?	Never	1 or 2 Times	3 to 5 Times	6 to 9 Times	10 to 19 Times	20 to 29 Times	30 to 39 Times	40+ Times

SECTION 4: GANG SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

GANGS AT SCHOOL:

Q-68 Are there any gangs at your school? No Yes Don't know

Q-69 Do any of the students at your school belong to a gang? No Yes Don't know

Q-70 What about gangs that don't have members attending your school…have any

Of those gangs come around your school in the past six months? No Yes Don't know

Q-71 How often have gangs been involved in fights, attacks, or violence at your schoolin the past six months?

Never Once or twice a month Once or twice a week Almost Every Day Don't know

Q-72 Have gangs been involved in the sale of drugs at your school in the past six months? No Yes Don't know

Q-73 Have any gang members brought guns to your school in the past six months? No Yes Don't know

Do the gangs around your school do the following things?

Q-74 Help out in the community	Yes	No
Q-75 Get in fights with other gangs	Yes	No
Q-76 Provide protection for each other	Yes	No
Q-77 Steal things	Yes	No
Q-78 Rob other people	Yes	No
Q-79 Steal cars	Yes	No
Q-80 Sell marijuana	Yes	No
Q-81 Sell other illegal drugs	Yes	No
Q-82 Damage and destroy property	Yes	No

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH GANGS:

Q-83 Have you ever belonged to a gang?	No	Yes	
Q-84 If you have ever belonged to a gang, did that gang have a name?	No	Yes	I Have Never Belonged to a Gang
Q-85 Are you a gang member now?	No	Yes	

Q-43 How old were you when you first belonged to a gang?	Never Have	10 or Younger	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or Older

Q-86 How many members are there in your gang?	Not in a gang	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	More than 30
Q-87 How many boys belong to your gang?	No boys	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	More than 30
Q-88 How many girls belong to your gang?	No girls	1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	More than 30

Q-89 If you belong to a gang, suppose the circle below represents your gang. How far from the center of the gang are you (circle the number that Best describes your place in the gangs) 1 2 3 4 5

If you are in a gang, do any of the following describe your gang?

Q-90 You can join before age	No	Yes
Q-91 There are initiation rites	No	Yes
Q-92 The gang has established leaders	No	Yes
Q-93 The gang ha regular meetings	No	Yes
Q-94 The gang has specific rules and codes	No	Yes
Q-95 Gang members have specific roles	No	Yes
Q-96 There are roles for each age group	No	Yes
Q-97The gang has symbols and colors	No	Yes
Q-98 There are specific roles for girls	No	Yes

Q-99 Why did you join the gang? (Check all that apply)

For fun
For protection
A friend was in the gang
A brother or sister was in the gang
I was forced to join
To get respect
For money
To fit in better
Other: _____
Not in a gang

If you are in a gang, does your gang do the following things?

Q-100 Help out in the community?	No	Yes
Q-101 Get in fights with other gangs?	No	Yes
Q-102 Provide protection for each other	No	Yes
Q-103 Steal things	No	Yes
Q-104 Rob other people	No	Yes
Q-105 Steal cars	No	Yes
Q-106 Sell marijuana	No	Yes
Q-107 Sell other illegal drugs	No	Yes
Q-108 Damage or destroy property	No	Yes

Section 1				
Demographics	**Demographics**	Age, Grade, Gender, Ethnicity, Family Members, Older Siblings, Younger Siblings, Language at Home, Zip Code, Father's Education, Mother's Education, Urbanicity	**12**	*

Section 2				
COMMUNITY DOMAIN				
Community Domain Risk Factors	**Risk Factor**	Associated Scales	**28**	
	Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	Low Neighborhood Attachment	3	*
		Community Disorganization	5	*
	Transitions and Mobility	Personal Transitions and Mobility	4	*
		Community Transitions and Mobility	1	*
	Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	Laws and Norms	10	*
	Perceived Availability of Drugs and Firearms	Perceived Availability	5	*
Community Domain Protective Factors	**Protective Factor**	Associated Scales	**9**	
	Community Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	Community Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	6	*
	Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	3	*

Items with a "" are those that current research suggests are strongly related to gang involvement.*

FAMILY DOMAIN				
Family Domain Risk Factors	**Risk Factor**	Associated Scales	**20**	
	Family Management Problems	Poor Family Supervision	5	*
		Poor Family Discipline	3	*
	Family Conflict	Family Conflict	3	*
	Family Involvement in the Problem Behavior	Family History of Antisocial Behavior	6	*
	Favorable Parental Attitudes Towards the Problem Behavior	Parental Attitudes Favorable to Antisocial Behavior	3	*
Family Domain Protective Factors	**Protective Factor**	Associated Scales	**11**	
	Family Attachment	Family Attachment	7	
	Family Opportunities for Positive Involvement	Family Opportunities for Positive Involvement	2	
	Family Rewards for Positive Involvement	Family Rewards for Positive Involvement	2	

SCHOOL DOMAIN				
School Domain Risk Factors	**Risk Factor**	Associated Scales	**8**	
	Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	Academic Failure	2	*
	Lack of Commitment to School	Low School Commitment	6	*
	Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	*Listed In Peer-Individual Domain*		
School Domain ***Protective Factors***	**Protective Factor**	Associated Scales	**7**	
	School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement	4	
	School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	School Rewards for Prosocial Involvement	3	

INDIVIDUAL-PEER DOMAIN				
Individual-Peer Risk Factors	**Risk Factor**	Associated Scales	**28**	
	Friends Who Engage in Problem Behaviors	Interaction With Antisocial Peers	6	*
	Favorable Attitudes Toward Problem Behaviors	Favorable Attitudes Towards Antisocial Behavior	5	*
	Early Initiation of Problem Behaviors	Early Initiation of ATOD Use and Delinquency	8	*
	Constitutional Factors	Impulsiveness	5	*
		Sensation Seeking)	4	*
Individual-Peer Protective Factors	**Protective Factor**	Associated Scales	**9**	
	Religiosity	Religiosity	1	
	Social Skills	Social Skills	4	
	Belief in the Moral Order	Belief in the Moral Order	4	

Section 3				
Self-Reported Delinquency	***Delinquency***	School Suspension, Carried a Handgun, Sold Drugs, Stole Vehicle, Arrested, Attacked to Hurt, Drunk/High at School, Taken Handgun to School	8	*

Section 4				
Gang-Specific Questions	**Gangs at School**	Gangs at School, Gangs Around the School, Gang Fights at School, Drug Sales at School, Guns at School	15	
	Personal Experiences With Gangs	Ever Belonged, Gang Name, Current Gang Member, Age at Joining, Number of Members by Total and Gender, characteristics of the Gang, Reasons for Joining, Activities of the Gang	27	

7. Community Perceptions Data

No picture of a community's gang crime problem would be complete without the views of *community leaders, community residents, parents, and gang-involved youth.* This information can be collected using surveys, personal interviews, and/or focus groups. The extent of this data collection should be determined by the time and funds available. It also is useful to conduct focus groups with social service workers, detention center staff, and other professionals who spend significant amounts of time with gang-involved youths.

At a minimum, information from the following groups should be collected:

- Community leaders, both formal and informal
- Community residents
- Parents (including parents of gang members, if possible)
- Agency staff members (social services, detention centers, probation, community-based agencies)
- Gang members

The primary reason for gathering this type of information is to determine how community members view gang activity and how they think gangs affect the community. Some of the questions developed for this type of information gathering are open-ended, and interviewers should encourage respondents to freely elaborate. These questions give respondents an opportunity to relate their own experience or beliefs about gangs and gang activity in their community. Care should be taken to ensure that respondents represent the community being assessed in terms of demographics.

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about the community's perceptions of gang crime, the information needed to answer the questions, and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Community Perceptions of Gangs

Questions to Be Answered	Information Needed to Answer	Sources of Information	How to Obtain
1. Do community leaders perceive a gang problem? If so, what is the problem? Are they prepared to respond?	Feedback from community leaders about the gang crime problem	Police chief, sheriff, mayor, county prosecutor, probation, judges, youth agency director, county commissioners, all Steering Committee members, faith-based leaders, other community leaders	Community leader interviews by phone or mail
2. Do parents perceive their children to be involved in or at risk of involved in gangs? Why? What should be done?	Input from sample group of parents	Parents, parents of gang members	Parent focus groups

3. How do community residents perceive the gang problem? What do community residents believe should be done?	Input from community residents	Community residents	Community resident survey
4. How do youth workers and youth-serving agencies perceive the problem? What issues are contributing to the area's gang problems? What solutions might be available?	Input from youth-serving agencies	Youth-serving agencies	Agency survey
5. Who is involved in gangs?	Demographic information	Gang members	Gang member interviews
6. What crimes are gang youth committing?	Involvement in criminal activity		
7. Why did youth join a gang? Why would they leave?	Reasons for joining a gang, potential reasons for leaving		
8. What factors are contributing to the gang problem?	Causes of gang problem		

Information from the interviews, surveys, and focus groups should be compared across the different groups, when possible. Use appropriate charts, tables, and other graphics to display the data can be helpful, such as the chart in **Table 2**. Answers to the following questions should be addressed:

1. Do community leaders, parents, and community residents believe a gang problem exists in the community? If so, what is that problem?
2. Are there significant differences across the groups? What are those differences?
3. Do parents believe their children to be involved in gangs or at risk for gang involvement?
4. What do the respondent groups think should be done about the gang problem?
5. In what ways are the respondent groups willing to respond to the gang problem?

Table 2—Sample Community Perceptions Data

Residents' Concerns	
Concern	**Percent of Respondents**
Gang activity	45.1%
Burglary and robbery	40.8%
Drug dealing	34.1%
Low police activity	32.9%
Unemployment	27.5%
Loud music	25.5%
Unkempt property	24.7%
Insufficient street lighting	20.4%
Vandalism	13.3%

Graffiti	12.2%
Homicide	10.2%
Domestic violence	9.8%
Truancy	3.1%

Source: South Park Community Resident Survey, 2008

Gang-Involved Youth

Gang members face problems beyond those posed by the gang itself. Most lack job skills, and many cannot read and write very well. Few have the self-control needed to hold down a steady job, even if they qualify for one.

As part of the assessment process, an effort should be made to interview at least 25 to 50 gang members—more, if possible—to determine their demographic profiles, criminal involvement, and history with gangs. Interviews with gang members can provide a variety of information, including:

- When local youth joined gangs, on average
- What crimes gang youth are committing
- Youths' perceptions of the gang problem
- Involvement in high-risk behaviors
- Their views on why youth join gangs
- Their relationships with parents, peers, teachers, police, and other community members
- What can be done to prevent or reduce gang problems in their community

Gang members are often involved with the justice system and can usually be identified through that system. However, gang-involved youth may be difficult to locate: they may be out of school; they may work; they may be homeless or unemployed. Although some gang youth under age 16 will still be attending mainstream schools, others can be found in alternative schools, GED programs, job-training programs, or community-based programs. Some can be located in juvenile detention centers and residential treatment centers, while others can be located through juvenile and adult probation. It may be possible to locate gang members through a "snowball" sampling technique; that is, each gang member interviewed is asked to suggest a gang friend or member of his/her gang to be interviewed. Outreach agencies may also be able to play a role in facilitating these interviews. The gang members interviewed should reflect the racial/gender/age mix of gangs in the community. It may help to provide a small incentive, such as a $10 or $20 gift certificate to a local store or restaurant, to interest gang members in participating in the interview.

When planning the interview process, make sure that personal interviews with gang members are conducted by a neutral party and in a neutral setting, and that all information obtained is kept completely confidential. **Under no circumstances should a gang member be interviewed by law enforcement or others associated with the justice system**. Gang-member interviews should be held in a private location.

The gang member interview form (**EXHIBIT 7.5**) is designed to be conducted in a personal, face-to-face format. Sample consent forms for the respondent and for parents/guardians of gang members who are minors are included in **EXHIBIT 7.6.**

Table 1 on page 95 identifies the questions to be answered about gang-involved youth in the community, the information that will be needed to answer those questions, and the sources of that information. The data collected from these interviews should be analyzed in aggregate form before being reported to the Steering Committee. No identifying personal details should be included. Report the data using the following variables where appropriate:

Gender: Male/Female

Race: Use categories as defined on page 37.

Age: Use categories as defined on page 37.

Use appropriate graphs, charts, and tables to present the information in a user-friendly format, such as those shown in **Tables 3 and 4.**

Table 3—Percentage of Gang Members Reporting Criminal Activity in the Last Year

Crime	% of Males (n)	% of Females (n)	% of Total (n)
Beat up or battered someone without using a dangerous weapon	76.8% (73)	75.0% (6)	76.7% (79)
Threatened to attack a person without using a gun, knife, or other dangerous weapon	69.5% (66)	75.0% (6)	69.9% (72)
Wrote gang graffiti on schools, houses, stores, etc.	55.2% (53)	50.0% (4)	54.8% (57)
Stole a car, truck, or motorcycle	42.1% (40)	50.0% (4)	42.7% (44)
Robbed someone by force or by threat of force using a weapon	29.5% (28)	37.5% (3)	35.9% (37)
Beat up or battered someone using a dangerous weapon	36.8% (35)	25.0% (2)	35.9% (37)
Participated in a drive-by shooting	28.4% (27)	50.0% (4)	30.1% (31)
Participated in a murder	6.3% (6)	12.5% (1)	6.8% (7)
Sold drugs	49.5% (47)	25.0% (2)	47.6% (49)

Source: Tabulation of data collected from interviews with gang members

Table 4—Reason for Joining a Gang

Reason for Joining a Gang (gang member identified reason as important or very important)	% of Male Respondents (n)	% of Female Respondents (n)	% of Total
Protection	41.9% (39)	50% (4)	42.5%
Respect	29.3% (27)	50% (4)	30.6%
Money	31.2% (29)	37.5% (3)	31.7%
Friends in the gang	29% (27)	37.5% (3)	29.7%
To fit in	23.9% (22)	37.5% (3)	25.0%
Fun	23.9% (22)	25.0% (2)	23.7%
Brother/sister in the gang	15.1% (14)	25.0% (2)	15.8%
Forced to	2.2% (2)	12.5% (1)	3.0%

Source: Tabulation of data collected from interviews with gang members (n=101)

Table 5—Benefits of Gang Membership	
Gang Benefit	**% Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed (n)**
My gang provides loyalty	72% (72)
I enjoy being a member of my gang	56% (56)
My gang is like a family to me	54% (54)
My gang makes me feel respected	51% (51)
My gang makes me feel like I really belong somewhere	38% (38)
Being in a gang is a good way to make money	38% (38)
My gang makes me feel important	29% (29)
My gang makes me feel like I have a purpose	24% (24)

Source: Tabulation of data collected from interviews with gang members (n=100)

Answers to the following questions should be considered:

1. Who is involved in gangs (age, gender, race)?
2. Why and when (age) did they join a gang?
3. What is their school/education status?
4. What is their family status?
5. What is their employment status?
6. What crimes do gang youth report committing?
7. What are gang youths' perceptions about the gang problem?
8. Why would youth leave a gang?

When these data are presented, include any additional information from the gang member interviews that may shed light on the nature of gang activity in the community.

Data collection instruments provided in this chapter include:

Exhibit 7.1 Interview form for community leaders (page 100)
Exhibit 7.2 Survey form for community residents (pages 101)
Exhibit 7.3 Focus group questions for parents and parents of gang members (page 103)
Exhibit 7.4 Survey for youth-serving agencies (page 104)
Exhibit 7.5 Interview form for gang members (page 105)
Exhibit 7.6 Sample consent forms for gang-member interviews (page 112)

Exhibit 7.1
Community Leader Interview Form

1. Do you believe gangs are a problem in your community?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know

If so, what kinds of problems do gangs present in your community? Please choose your top three problems.

___ Increase in property crimes
___ Increase in vandalism/graffiti
___ Increased fear in community
___ School disruption
___ Increase in drug crimes
___ Public nuisance
___ Family disruption
___ Increase in violent crime against persons
___ Increase in weapon crimes
___ Increased fear for safety
___ Other, please specify _____

2. Why do you believe there is gang activity in your community? Please choose your top three reasons.

___ Poverty
___ School problems
___ Police labeling
___ Gang members move to community from other places
___ Boredom
___ Family problems
___ Power
___ Protection
___ Lack of activities
___ Prejudice
___ Family/friends in gangs
___ To feel loved/sense of belonging
___ Other, please specify _____

3. What is the general community response to gangs by (law enforcement, parents, educators, other community leaders, etc.)?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What should be done to reduce the gang problem in the community? Please check your top three choices.

___ Jobs and job training
___ Tutoring
___ Mentoring
___ Recreation programs
___ School programs
___ More police presence
___ More parental involvement
___ New laws/ordinances
___ Other, please specify _____

5. Are you satisfied with the current response to gangs by law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, etc.?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Have you had any personal experiences with a gang member? Please specify.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. How can you help to improve the community's response to gangs?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Exhibit 7.2
Community Resident Survey

1. Are you:
❍ Female ❍ Male

2. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself to be?
❍ White/Caucasian
❍ Black/African American
❍ American Indian
❍ Hispanic/Spanish
❍ Asian
❍ Native American/American Indian
❍ Other: _____

3. What is your current marital status?
❍ Never married
❍ Married
❍ Widowed
❍ Separated
❍ Divorced

4. What is the intersection (cross streets) nearest your place of residence?

_____

5. Do you feel safer in your community than you did two years ago?
❍ No ❍ Yes

Please Explain: _____

_____

6. Please pick the top three concerns that you have about your community, if any.
❍ Unemployment ❍ Graffiti
❍ Homicide ❍ Truancy
❍ Gang Activity ❍ Vandalism
❍ Loud music ❍ Domestic violence
❍ Unkempt property ❍ Insufficient street lighting
❍ Drug dealing ❍ Low police activity
❍ Burglary or robbery
❍ Other: _____

7. Do you think there are gangs in your community?
❍ No ❍ Yes

8. Do you think your child(ren) is in a gang or at risk of being in a gang?
❍ No ❍ Yes

9. In the past year, has gang activity in your community:
❍ Increased
❍ Decreased
❍ Remained about the same

10. Please pick the top three problems, if any, that gangs present in the community:
❍ Gangs are not a problem here ❍ Fighting
❍ Increase in violent crime ❍ School disruption
❍ Increase in drug crimes ❍ Public nuisance
❍ Increase in weapon crimes ❍ Family disruption
❍ Increased fear for safety
❍ Other: _____

11. Please pick the top three reasons you believe gang activity exists in your community:
❍ Gangs are not a problem here ❍ Boredom
❍ School problems ❍ Poverty
❍ Lack of activities ❍ Power
❍ Family/friends in gangs ❍ Protection
❍ Police labeling ❍ Family problems
❍ Gang members move from other areas
❍ To feel love/sense of belonging
❍ Other: _____

12. Please pick the top three things you believe should be done about gangs and gang activity in your community:
❍ Gangs are not a problem here ❍ Programs/recreation
❍ More police protection ❍ Mentoring
❍ Jobs provision and job training ❍ Tutoring
❍ Other: _____

13. Please rank the following organizations from most responsible (1) for dealing with gangs and gang activity to least responsible (12) for dealing with gangs and gang activity:

____ Police
____ Church
____ Court/criminal justice system
____ Family
____ Service providers
____ Neighborhood association
____ School
____ Housing authority
____ Office of juvenile affairs
____ Treatment providers
____ Community residents
____ Office of Youth & Family Services

Continue to the next page

Exhibit 7.2 (continued)

14. How has your community responded to gang activity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. How satisfied are you with the current response to gang activity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. What are you willing to do, if anything, to help deal with gangs and gang activity in your community? Please check all that apply:

- ❍ Nothing
- ❍ Neighborhood outreach
- ❍ Become a youth group leader
- ❍ Tutor
- ❍ Form sports leagues/teams
- ❍ Mentor
- ❍ Teach skills (auto mechanics, crafts, music, computer skills, electronics, etc.)
- ❍ Other: _____

17. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

- ❍ Completed grade school or less
- ❍ Some high school
- ❍ Completed high school
- ❍ Some college
- ❍ Completed college
- ❍ Graduate or professional school after college
- ❍ Vocational or technical training

Thank you for your participation.
Your opinions and comments are appreciated.

If you would like to leave any additional comments for us, please use this area or attach another sheet of paper.

Exhibit 7.3
Parent Focus Group Questions

1. Do you believe gangs are a problem in your community?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know

If so, what kinds of problems do gangs present in your community? (Use list below as prompts if necessary.)

___ Increase in property crimes
___ Increase in vandalism/graffiti
___ Increased fear in community
___ School disruption
___ Increase in drug crimes
___ Public nuisance
___ Family disruption
___ Increase in violent crime against persons
___ Increase in weapon crimes
___ Increased fear for safety
___ Other, please specify _____

2. Why do you believe there is gang activity in your community? (Use list below as prompts if necessary.)

___ Poverty
___ School problems
___ Police labeling
___ Gang members move to community from other places
___ Boredom
___ Family problems
___ Power
___ Protection
___ Lack of activities
___ Prejudice
___ Family/friends in gangs
___ To feel loved/sense of belonging
___ Other, please specify _____

3. What should be done to reduce the gang problem in the community? (Use list below as prompts if necessary.)

___ Jobs and job training
___ Tutoring
___ Mentoring
___ Recreation programs
___ School programs
___ More police presence
___ More parental involvement
___ Other, please specify _____

4. In reference to question 3, who is responsible for taking action in the reduction of the gang problem?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Do you think that your child(ren) are at risk of gang membership?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, please explain_____
_____
_____
_____

Include the following questions for parents of gang members:

6. Why do you think your child joined a gang?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. What concerns or problems has your child faced since joining a gang?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. What effect has your child's gang membership had on your family?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Exhibit 7.4
Youth-Serving Agency Survey

1. Do you believe that gang activity is increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same level among the youth that you serve?

   - Increasing
   - Decreasing
   - Staying the same

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What issues do you think contribute to gang activity on the part of youth served by your project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you believe gang activity exists in your community? If so, why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What things should be done about gang activity in your community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exhibit 7.5
Gang Member Interview Form

SAMPLE
Introduction to Gang Member Interview

To be read by interviewer:

I would like to ask you some questions that will help us learn ore about gangs in (*your community*). We are interested in learning something about your life and experiences, as well as your involvement in a gang.

One section of the interview asks about criminal activity. Give us only the information that we ask for. Do not give us any additional information, including names or dates, connected to any crimes.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. That is, it will not be shared with anyone. The answers you give us will be added to the information we receive from others we are interviewing and then analyzed together.

You may refuse to answer any question in this interview, and you may end your participation in the interview at any time.

We are asking your permission (and that of your parent or guardian, if you are under the legal age of adult) to conduct this interview. Again, this information will be kept strictly private and confidential.

Are you willing to proceed?

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

Gang Member Interview

Demographics

1. What is your date of birth?_____

2. Are you:
❍ Female ❍ Male____

3. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself to be? (choose one best answer)
❍ White/Caucasian
❍ Black/African American
❍ Asian
❍ Hispanic/Latino
❍ Native American/American Indian
❍ Other (Please Specify)_____

4. What is the language you use most often at home?
_____

5. What is the intersection (which streets cross) nearest your place of residence?
_____

6. What is your current marital status?
❍ Never married
❍ Married
❍ Divorced
❍ Widowed
❍ Separated
❍ Do not know

7. Do you have any children?
❍ No ❍ Yes, If yes, how many? ___

8. Has any family member ever been in a gang?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, specify number of family members and relationship
_____

9. Are you currently employed?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, do you have a full-time job? _____
If yes, do you have a part-time job? _____
What type of work do you do? _____

School

10. Are you currently in school?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

11. If you are currently in school, what grade are you in?
_____

12. If you are not in school, what is the highest grade you have completed?
❍ Grade ____ ❍ Do not know
❍ No response

13. Generally, what are/were your grades like?
❍ Mostly As ❍ Mostly Bs
❍ Mostly Cs ❍ Mostly Ds
❍ Mostly Fs

14. For your current/most recent school, how much do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

Use a 5-point scale:
1) Strongly disagree
2) Disagree
3) Neither disagree nor agree
4) Agree
5) Strongly agree

____ If I have/had a problem, there is/was a teacher or staff member I could talk to.
____ I often feel/felt that no one at school cares/cared about me.
____ Even though there are lots of students around, I often feel/felt lonely.
____ I do not/did not feel that I am/was part of this school.
____ I often feel/felt like my teachers respect/respected me.
____ In school, I often feel/felt put down by other students.
____ Most of my teachers really listen/listened to what I have/had to say.
____ Most of my teachers are/were fair in supervising me if I step/stepped out of line.

15. Have you ever dropped out of school?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, what were the most recent reasons for dropping out?
_____
_____

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

16. Have you ever been suspended from school?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, what were the most recent reasons for suspension?

_____
_____

17. Have you ever been expelled from school?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, what were the most recent reasons for expulsion?

_____
_____

18. In the past year, how often have you witnessed any of the following gang activities at your school or on school grounds?

Use a 7-point scale:
1) Never/no times
2) 1 to 3 times
3) 4 to 10 times
4) 11 to 26 times
5) More than 26 times
6) Do not know
7) No response

____ Gang members selling drugs
____ Fights between members of different gangs
____ Fights between members of your own gang
____ A drive-by shooting
____ Gang intimidation
____ Gang recruiting
____ Not in school

Community

19. Are there areas right now in your community where you are afraid to walk alone?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, is it because of gang-related concerns?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Please explain:

_____
_____

20. In the last year, how often have you witnessed any of the following gang activities in your community?

Use a 7-point scale:
1) Never/no times
2) 1 to 3 times
3) 4 to 10 times
4) 11 to 26 times
5) More than 26 times
6) Do not know
7) No response

____ Gang members selling drugs
____ Fights between members of different gangs
____ Fights between members of your own gang
____ A drive-by shooting
____ Gang intimidation
____ Gang recruiting

21. In the last year, for each crime, please rate how serious a crime problem you think this is in your community?

Use a 7-point scale:
1) No problem
2) A small problem
3) A moderate problem
4) A serious problem
5) A very serious problem
6) Do not know
7) No response

____ Vandalism/graffiti
____ Burglary
____ Car theft
____ Robbery
____ Threats/intimidation
____ Gang to gang confrontations
____ Drug dealing
____ Alcohol use
____ Drive-by shooting
____ Possession of knife
____ Possession of gun
____ Firearms use
____ Firearms dealing
____ Arson
____ Assault/battery
____ Homicide/murder
____ School disruption
____ Other, please specify_____

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

22. Do you think there is a gang problem in your community?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If so, what do you think are the top three causes of the gang problem in your community?

____ Poverty
____ School problems
____ Police labeling
____ Gang members move to community from other places
____ Boredom
____ Family problems
____ Power
____ Lack of activities
____ Prejudice
____ Family/friends in gangs
____ To feel loved/sense of belonging
____ Other, please specify:_____

23. What do you think should be done about the gang problem in your community?

_____
_____
_____
_____

24. About how many adults have you known personally who in the past year have:

____ Used marijuana, crack, cocaine, or other drugs?
____ Sold or dealt drugs?
____ Done other things that could get them into trouble with police such as stealing, selling stolen goods, mugging, or assaulting others?
____ Gotten drunk?

25. Are any of your friends gang members?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

26. If you wanted to get a handgun, how easy would it be for you to get one?

❍ Very hard ❍ Somewhat hard
❍ Somewhat easy ❍ Very easy
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

27. If you wanted to get drugs like cocaine, LSD, amphetamines, crack, etc., how easy would it be for you to get some?

❍ Very hard ❍ Somewhat hard
❍ Somewhat easy ❍ Very easy
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

28. Are there adults in your neighborhood you can talk to about something important?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Gang-Related Activities

29. Are you currently a gang member?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

30. In the last 6 months, have you been an active gang member?

❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

31. What is your most recent position or rank in the gang?

❍ Leader
❍ Core member/influential (with gang all of the time)
❍ Regular member (involved most of the time)
❍ Peripheral member (minimally hangs out)
❍ Wannabe
❍ Veteran/heavy/old gangster/senior gang member
❍ Do not know
❍ No response

32. Why did you join or associate with a gang? Please rank your answers from 1 – most important to 9 – least important.

_____ For fun
_____ For protection
_____ A friend was in the gang
_____ A brother or sister was in the gang
_____ I was forced to join
_____ To get respect
_____ For money
_____ To fit in better
_____ Other, please specify _____

33. How old were you when you first belonged to a gang?

About____ years old.

Continue to the next page

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

34. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Use a 7-point scale:
1) **Strongly disagree**
2) **Disagree**
3) **Neither disagree nor agree**
4) **Agree**
5) **Strongly agree**
6) **Do not know**
7) **No response**

_____ Being in my gang makes me feel important.
_____ My gang members provide a good deal of support and loyalty for one another.
_____ Being a member of a gang makes me feel respected.
_____ Being a member of a gang makes me feel like I am a useful person to have around.
_____ Being a member of a gang makes me feel like I really belong somewhere.
_____ I enjoy being a member of my gang.
_____ My gang is like a family to me.
_____ Being in a gang is a good way to make money.

The next few questions ask about your activities involving crime, drugs, and alcohol.

35. In the past year, have you:

Written gang graffiti on school property, neighborhood houses, stores, etc.?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Thrown rocks or bottles at persons, vehicles, or property?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Destroyed property worth less than $300?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Destroyed property worth $300 or more?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Set fire to building or property?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Stolen bicycle or bike parts?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Stolen a motor vehicle?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Stolen parts or property from a vehicle (hubcaps, stereo, cell phone, etc.)?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Fenced or sold stolen goods (other than weapons)?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Shoplifted?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Entered a house, store, or building to commit a theft?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Broken into a house, store, or building to commit a theft?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Fenced or sold weapons or firearms?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Threatened to attack a person <u>without</u> using a gun, knife, or other dangerous weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Threatened to attack a person using a gun, knife, or other dangerous weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Robbed someone by force or by threat of force <u>without</u> using a weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Robbed someone by force or by threat of force using a weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Beaten up or battered someone <u>without</u> using a dangerous weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Continue to the next page

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

Beaten up or battered someone using a dangerous weapon?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Forced someone to have sex with you (rape)?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Participated in a drive-by shooting?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Participated in a homicide?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Participated in other crimes (specify_____).

36. In the past year, have you used or tried any drugs?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, about how many days per month do you use any drugs?
___ Days ___ Do not know ___ No response

37. In the past year, have you sold any drugs?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, did the money go to:
❍ Benefit the gang ❍ Personal use
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

38. In the past year, have you used any kind of alcohol?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, have you drunk:
❍ Wine
❍ Beer
❍ Hard liquor

39. In the past year, have you had any arrests or police contacts? This may include being stopped, searched, questioned, or being brought to the police station at any time.
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

If yes, how many times?____

If yes, please describe the incident(s).
_____
_____
_____

40. For the incident(s) described above, please indicate if you were:

❍ Treated fairly by the police MOST of the time.
❍ Treated fairly by the police SOME of the time.
❍ NOT treated fairly by the police SOME of the time.
❍ NOT treated fairly by the police MOST of the time.
❍ Do not know
❍ No response

41. Do you think you will ever leave the gang?
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

42. If you would leave the gang, which of the following are reasons likely to get you out of a gang? Identify all that would apply.

Advice/pressure from a family member/relative
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Advice/pressure from someone else (specify who_____)
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Move out of neighborhood
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Because of a steady girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Get married
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Become a parent
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Continue to the next page

Exhibit 7.5 (continued)

Family responsibilities (specify what_____)
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Obtain a job
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Get into school/education program
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Recreation/sports program
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Go to jail/prison
❍ Yes ❍ No
❍ Do not know ❍ No response

Other, please specify:_____

End of Survey

Exhibit 7.6

SAMPLE

Consent Form and Receipt for Gang Member Interview

Respondent's Copy

I am participating in a community assessment to learn more about gang problems in (*name of community)*. My participation in this interview will provide information for this assessment and is part of a communitywide data-collection effort.

I understand that the purpose of this interview is to provide information about gang activities in my community, including my life and experiences, and my involvement in a gang.

I understand that providing this information is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question.

I will not discuss any of the following activities as part of this interview because I understand that the interviewer will be required by law to disclose such information. *(Note: The Research Partner should research which activities fall under this state requirement—each state may be different. Each activity must be listed on this consent form.)*

This form acknowledges that I have been informed about the purpose of this interview and agree to participate. I have received a copy of this consent form.

_____ _____

Respondent Signature Date

_____ _____

Interviewer Signature Date

Exhibit 7.6 (continued)

SAMPLE
Consent Form and Receipt for Gang Member Interview

Parent/Guardian Copy

My son or daughter is being interviewed as part of an assessment to learn more about gang problems in (*name of community)*.

I understand that interviewing my son/daughter will provide information that will assist this assessment and is part of a communitywide data-collection effort.

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary and that my son/daughter may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question.

I also understand that he/she will not discuss any of the following activities as part of this interview because I understand that the interviewer will be required by law to disclose such information. *(Note: The Research Partner should research which activities fall under this state requirement—each state may be different. Each activity must be listed on this consent form.)*

This form acknowledges that I have been informed about the purpose of this interview and agree to let my son/daughter participate.

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____ _____

Interviewer Signature Date

8. Community Resources Data

One goal of this assessment is to identify those organizations that provide (or could provide) services to gang members or youth at high risk of gang involvement. Many of these services are formal and delivered through established organizations. Others are informal or offered through community or grassroots groups to neighborhood residents. There also may be opportunities to identify additional organizations while conducting interviews with community leaders or hosting focus groups. Interviews should be conducted with the agency or organization director or other key personnel in each identified agency with knowledge about the agency's gang-related programs, as well as the agency's governance and funding structure. Once organizations are identified, information can be gathered through phone or personal interviews. The assessment should also examine historic responses to gangs, including programs and/or strategies that have been implemented to deal with gangs, and the results of these programs.

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about the community's resources to assist gang-involved youth, their families, and high-risk youth; the information needed to answer the questions; and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Current Activities and Resources

Questions to Be Answered	Information Needed to Answer	Sources of Information	How to Obtain
1. How has the community historically responded to gang activity?	Previous studies and reports	Law enforcement, university, and task force reports	Review of reports, key informant interviews
2. What services are being provided (or could be provided) to gang members?	Organization profile—purpose, target population, service area, funding source, anti-gang focus	Organizations, neighborhood groups, faith-based groups	Community resource inventory, key informant interviews
3. What law enforcement strategies are in place to prevent, intervene, and suppress gang activity?	Program and strategy profiles, focus (prevention, intervention, suppression), resources, collaborative efforts	Law enforcement agencies, probation, corrections, and prosecution personnel	Key informant interviews
4. Do courts, detention centers, and correction departments conduct risk assessments that include gang membership?	Program profiles, resources, policy and procedures	Court, detention center, corrections personnel	Key informant interviews

Answers to the following questions should also be addressed:

1. What services are being provided to gang members?

2. Are these services sufficient to meet the needs of this population? If not, what services would be needed to meet the needs identified through this assessment?

3. What services are in place that could be extended to gang members? What, if anything, would be needed to do so?

Historic Responses to Gangs
A good starting point for a discussion of community resources is to describe the community's historic responses to gangs and the outcomes/results of these responses. These responses should be categorized by whether they focused on prevention, intervention, suppression, community mobilization, or other strategies. Discussion of this topic should include a listing of the agencies that participated in these strategies and whether these strategies are ongoing or have been curtailed. If these responses were stopped, the Assessment Work Group should document the reasons for this change in approach.

This information can be summarized from prior reports and surveys on gangs and related problems that may be available from schools, police, and local and state governmental agencies, or it may be collected through personal interviews with key informants in the community.

Community Resource Inventory
The inventory of local resources should:

- Document programs, services, and community organizations that can be incorporated into your efforts to address identified gang-related risk factors and behaviors.
- Identify types of resources and services that are missing in the community to address gang-related risk factors and behaviors.
- Identify gaps in the number of youth programs can serve or are currently serving.
- Consider the level of training and experience in serving gang members in existing programs.
- Identify potential community partners that can provide financial, human, and infrastructure to your efforts.

Data collected about community resources will assist in analyzing and identifying gaps in services available to gang members or youth at risk of gang membership. The analysis of the data should compare available resources to risk factors in the community, as identified in the student survey and community demographic data, and related service needs of gang members collected during the assessment process. The analysis can provide information to use in developing new or expanding/improving existing programs.

At a minimum, any public or private organization that provides the following services should be surveyed:

- Counseling
- Drug treatment
- Job training
- Education and vocational training
- Mentoring
- Recreation
- Youth development

Additional community resources should be inventoried that could support efforts to provide services to gang members and youth at risk of gang membership. Because these resources are often nontraditional or do not provide direct services, they are often overlooked. They include those organizations or businesses that may provide mentors, financial assistance to the project, material donations, or public and private infrastructure (such as meeting or office space in targeted areas of the community), or that meet medical needs and assistance with food or housing. Examples of organizations to inventory include:

- Private businesses
- Faith-based organizations
- Community-service organizations
- Neighborhood associations

After these data are organized, a summary of programs should be provided in the Assessment Report.

Exhibit 8.1 is provided for collecting information on existing resources from community agencies and organizations.

A Web-based Community Resource Inventory database is available on the OJJDP Strategic Planning Tool at www.iir.com/nygc/tool. Once surveys (Exhibit 8.1) have been completed, communities can enter these data into this online database. This inventory allows the user to record information about community organizations, programs, services, and activities that could be incorporated into a comprehensive approach to gangs. Templates are provided to guide the collection and manual recording of this information. The information can subsequently be entered into a searchable database. Once the database is populated, the user can produce a matrix that answers the questions, "What does our community have in place?" and "What do we need that is missing?"

Justice System Programs

In the course of gathering information about gang-related programs or services, information should be collected about any special justice system programs and strategies—particularly those in *police*, *probation*, or *corrections agencies*—that are currently in place to deal with gangs. Additionally, information regarding gaps in these services and programs that may be contributing to the gang problem should be addressed.

Answers to the following questions should be discussed in the report.

1. What law enforcement strategies are in place to prevent, intervene with, and suppress gang activity?
2. What other justice system programs, services, or activities are provided to gang members?
3. When were these programs started? How have these programs changed over time? What success have they had?
4. Do juvenile justice agencies conduct individual risk assessments that include gang membership?
5. How has the community historically responded to gang activity? Has this worked? Why has the problem not gone away?

Exhibit 8.1
Community Resource Inventory

1. Agency Name:

_____

2. Program Name (if any):

_____

3. Program Purpose:

_____
_____
_____

4. Service(s) Provided:

_____
_____
_____

5. Dosage of Services:

_____
_____
_____

6. Target Population/Eligibility Criteria:

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Program Capacity:

_____

8. Is the program currently full? If so, how long is the wait for services?

O Yes O No

_____
_____

9. Geographic Service Area:

_____
_____
_____

10. Does the program focus on gang members?

O Yes O No

11. Is program staff experienced at serving gang members?

O Yes O No

12. If risk assessments are conducted, do they include gang membership?

O Yes O No

13. Funding Sources:

_____
_____
_____

9. Data-Collection Tools

Depending on the nature of the information to be gathered, different instruments are used to conduct the assessment: forms for gathering data from official sources such as police or school records; surveys/interviews to gather information from youth, community residents, and others; and focus groups to elicit free-flowing perspectives.

For purposes of the data-collection process, the following discussion provides information on the types of data-collection tools most commonly used.

Self-Administered Surveys

Self-administered surveys have special strengths and weaknesses. They are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population and make large samples feasible. In one sense, these surveys are flexible, making it possible to ask many questions on a given topic. This also provides flexibility in the analysis of the responses. On the other hand, standardized questionnaire items often represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances, and experiences. By designing questions that will be appropriate for all respondents, it is possible to miss what is most appropriate to many of the respondents (Babbie, 1992).

Some advantages of the self-administered survey are:

- *Low cost*. Extensive training is not required to administer the survey. Processing and analysis are usually simpler and cheaper than for other methods.
- *Reduction in biasing error*. The questionnaire reduces the bias that might result from personal characteristics of interviewers and/or their interviewing skills.
- *Greater anonymity*. Absence of an interviewer provides greater anonymity for the respondent. This is especially helpful when the survey deals with sensitive issues such as questions about involvement in a gang, because respondents are more likely to respond to sensitive questions when they are not face to face with an interviewer.

Some of the disadvantages are:

- *Requires simple questions*. The questions must be straightforward enough to be comprehended solely on the basis of printed instructions and definitions.
- *No opportunity for probing*. The answers must be accepted as final. Researchers have no opportunity to clarify ambiguous answers.

Personal Interviews

The interview is an alternative method of collecting survey data. Rather than asking respondents to fill out surveys, interviewers ask questions orally and record respondents' answers. This type of survey generally decreases the number of "do not know" and "no answer" responses, compared with self-administered surveys. Interviewers also provide a guard against confusing items. If a respondent has misunderstood a question, the interviewer can clarify, thereby obtaining relevant responses (Babbie, 1992). As noted previously, personal interviews are a good way to gather information from community leaders, particularly those who might be unwilling or too busy to complete a written survey.

Some of the advantages of the personal interview are:

- *Flexibility*. Allows flexibility in the questioning process and allows the interviewer to clarify terms that are unclear.
- *Control of the interview situation*. Can ensure that the interview is conducted in private, and respondents do not have the opportunity to consult one another before giving their answers.
- *High response rate.* Respondents who would not normally respond to a mail questionnaire will often respond to a request for a personal interview.

Some of the disadvantages are:

- *Higher cost*. Costs are involved in selecting, training, and supervising interviewers; perhaps in paying them; and in the travel and time required to conduct interviews.
- *Interviewer bias*. The advantage of flexibility leaves room for the interviewer's personal influence and bias, making an interview subject to interviewer bias.
- *Lack of anonymity*. Often the interviewer knows all or many of the respondents. Respondents may feel threatened or intimidated by the interviewer, especially if a respondent is sensitive to the topic or to some of the questions (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996).

Focus Groups

Another method of collecting information is the focus group. Focus groups are useful in obtaining a particular kind of information that would be difficult to obtain using other methodologies. A focus group typically can be defined as a group of people who possess certain characteristics and provide information of a qualitative nature in a focused discussion.

Focus groups generally are composed of six to twelve people. Size is conditioned by two factors: the group must be small enough for everyone to participate, yet large enough to provide diversity. This group is special in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures. Participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic at hand, such as parents of gang members, and, generally, the participants are unfamiliar with each other. Typically, more than one focus group should be convened, since a group of seven to twelve people could be too atypical to offer any general insights on the gang problem.

A trained moderator probes for different perceptions and points of view, without pressure to reach consensus. Focus groups have been found helpful in assessing needs, developing plans, testing new ideas, or improving existing programs (Krueger, 1988; Babbie, 1992). **Exhibit 9.1** provides guidelines for conducting focus groups.

Focus groups offer several advantages:

- Flexibility allows the moderator to probe for more in-depth analysis and ask participants to elaborate on their responses.
- Outcomes are quickly known.
- They may cost less in terms of planning and conducting than large surveys and personal interviews.

Limitations include:

- A skilled moderator is essential.
- Differences between groups can be troublesome to analyze because of the qualitative nature of the data.
- Groups are difficult to assemble. People must take the time to come to a designated place at a particular time.
- Participants may be less candid in their responses in front of peers.

Exhibit 9.1
Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group

Focus group discussions are a popular method of obtaining information and opinions. They can provide insight into issues that cannot be covered through surveys or interviews. Focus groups are a good method to get people involved in this assessment process by having them provide input on a topic.

The following discussion provides a general overview of the focus group process. It is recommended that a person with experience with focus groups (preparing the discussion guide, moderating, and preparing the report) be contacted to assist in the process.

When preparing for the focus group discussions, there are several considerations: What questions will be asked? Who will participate? Where will the discussions be held? Who will conduct the sessions? The first order of business is to develop a discussion guide.

Develop the Discussion Guide
The discussion guide contains the questions that will be posed to participants during the focus group sessions. A limited number of questions should be used for each discussion. Avoid spending too much time on background information and concentrate on the important issues. There are two elements that should be considered when drafting the guide: (1) the information you wish to obtain and (2) from whom it will be obtained.

When developing the questions, keep in mind that all groups should follow the same discussion format. Using a general format for each question allows an analyst to make comparisons among the responses of various groups.

Reserve a Time and Place
Reserving a time and place to conduct the discussion is something that should be done well in advance of the actual date of the discussion sessions. Finding a location quickly will allow time to contact potential participants with the necessary logistical information. Try to find the most convenient and accessible location for the participants.

Provide an Incentive for Participation
Individuals taking part in a focus group session should be compensated for their participation. When contacting potential participants, use an incentive to encourage or persuade them to take part in the discussion session. Various forms of compensation can be used, most commonly a cash payment, lunch, or dinner. Snacks and beverages also may be provided. This often eases the tension created by the focus group setting and makes participants more open to discussing the topic.

Selection of Focus Group Participants
It is necessary to identify each group that will participate in the discussion sessions; for example, parents, community residents, school personnel. This will provide an indication of the number of discussion groups that will be conducted. Time, money, and the number of potential participants available will determine the number of groups that are feasible for each community.

A good size for a focus group is between six and twelve participants per session (American Statistical Association, 1997). Size is conditioned by two factors: the group must be small enough for everyone to participate and large enough to provide diversity of perceptions. Group participants should be selected because of common characteristics that relate to the focus group topic. For example, to gauge parents'

perceptions of gangs in school, a focus group might be conducted with parents who have school-aged children.

Moderating the Discussion

An experienced focus group moderator should conduct the sessions. Moderating the discussion is difficult, and effective leadership is essential if the group is to accomplish its purpose. The moderator must not only be in tune with the purpose of the group but also have the necessary skills to effectively guide the group process. If it is not possible to provide an experienced moderator, the following key points should be considered:

- Keep the conversation flowing. The moderator needs to keep control of the discussion session. If participants get off track, it is the role of the moderator to pull the group back together. The moderator should keep the discussion as informal as possible and should encourage all participants to say what is on their minds. The moderator is in charge of the discussion, and it is his or her duty to draw information from the participants.
- Length of discussion. Each session should last approximately 90 minutes. The amount of information participants have and their willingness to participate will most likely dictate the length of the session.
- Be neutral. One benefit of having an outside person moderate the discussion is that the person can be neutral. People may disagree during the discussion, and the moderator must give equal time to all viewpoints. The moderator should not provide information. It is not the moderator's place to offer or convince participants of any particular point of view.

Analysis of the Results

After each focus group, the moderator or a neutral observer should write a report describing the discussion for the Assessment Work Group. The written report should follow the questions contained in the discussion guide. The report can be broken down into the following sections:

- Background and objectives. This section provides basic information regarding the initiative, purpose, and objectives of the assessment.
- Methodology. This section should describe how, when, and where the focus groups were conducted. It should describe the characteristics of the focus group participants and why they were selected. It should inform readers that discussion results are the opinions of a small sample and should be viewed with that consideration in mind.
- Summary. The summary is approximately one or two pages in length and should provide the reader with the important findings. It is suggested that this section be in a bulleted or numbered format.
- Highlights of findings. This section provides the reader with an in-depth analysis of the questions contained in the discussion guide. This is the section in which quotes and comments should be used to support the research findings.

10. Using the Data

Throughout Chapters 4–8 in this Assessment Manual, a series of questions has been provided to guide the assessment process. Based on the data collected through the assessment, answers to these questions will provide a picture of the community's gang problem.

Once data are collected, they must be put into a format that is suitable for effective storage and retrieval. This will be critical for completing the analysis stage of the assessment and setting priorities among the needs and problems in the community. In addition, the data collected through this assessment will serve as the foundation for an ongoing database that includes official records and public perceptions of gang activity. Although forms of data that are collected may vary as a community moves from the assessment stage into project planning, implementation, and refinement, the basic procedures for managing data will remain the same.

As has been noted previously, describing a community's gang problem requires the capture and analysis of data from a variety of sources. Each will shed light on some facet of the problem—the level of gang crime, who is involved in gangs and criminal activity, why youth join and remain in gangs, and who is at risk of gang involvement. Because the gang problem is complex and different segments of the community perceive gangs and gang youth differently, the assessment process has been designed to gather information that reflects multiple perspectives. For instance, law enforcement, residents, and youth will be asked about their knowledge of gangs within the community and may respond with different answers. Conflicting responses should be viewed as an opportunity to engage in discussions, to educate, and to inform community leaders and residents.

Analyzing and Interpreting the Data

After data have been collected, entered, and cleaned of errors, the Assessment Work Group should begin analysis and interpretation of the data in preparation for writing a report. For the purpose of this assessment, simple descriptive, cross-sectional, and time-series analyses are all that will be required. After these analyses have been conducted, the Assessment Work Group will notice that multiple forms of data, collected in different ways from different sources, may all address a single common factor in the gang problem. These factors, supported by different types of data, should be highlighted.

It is recommended that sites compile all of the data collected into an Assessment Report, which will be discussed later in this chapter. In preparation for that, each data set should be examined independently, and then examined across all data sets. The objective is to weigh the strength of all the data and find possible correlations across different types of data. Examine the quantitative data from sources such as community demographics, gang crime data, and school demographic and performance data. In what ways do these quantitative data conflict or correspond with the qualitative data from community members, school personnel, gang members, students, and community leaders?

The challenge for communities is to identify data variables and combinations of variables that, when analyzed, reveal information useful for answering questions critical to the assessment. The Assessment Work Group, with help from the Research Partner, should attempt to find the best analytical methods for each type of data to best answer these questions.

Creating an Assessment Report

The final stages of the assessment involve formatting the results, in the form of an Assessment Report, for the Steering Committee. Once the data have been organized, the Assessment Work Group should use them to answer the questions found in Chapters 4–8, by section and data type. The answers to these questions provide much of the substance of the report itself.

The report should be organized by subject matter and type (community demographics, school/student data, law enforcement data, etc). It should note data limitations and conflicts between different data sources. The Assessment Report should include graphic displays of the data and supporting analyses and should describe areas of intersection between different data sets (key findings). It is not the purpose of the Assessment Report to prioritize issues or problems, design solutions, or identify target populations and target areas. Developing a community response based on these data is the Steering Committee's job.

In areas where different types of data point to similar issues, the Assessment Work Group may identify a key finding. Key findings should be highlighted in the report, along with supporting data. **Exhibit 10.1** includes three key findings from one community's Assessment Report.

Exhibit 10.1

Key Finding:
Gangs are involved in a high percentage of robberies and other violent crimes in South Park, leading to resident fear of victimization.

In 2001, gangs were responsible for 21 percent of murders, 9 percent of rapes, 28.2 percent of robberies, and 14.5 percent of aggravated assaults in South Park, according to an archival review of crime incident reports by Metropolis Police Department officers. (See **Table 1**.)

Table 1—Violent Crimes in South Park

	1999		2000		2001	
	All	Gang-Involved	All	Gang-Involved	All	Gang-Involved
Murder	15	3 (20%)	14	1 (7%)	19	4 (21%)
Rape	59	5 (8.5%)	30	7 (23.3%)	43	4 (9%)
Robbery	424	99 (23.3%)	362	78 (21.5%)	456	129 (28.2%)
Aggravated assault	685	104 (15.2%)	644	94 (14.6%)	678	98 (14.5%)

The data demonstrate a disturbing trend towards increasing rates of gang violence. While gang-related crime increased 30.6 percent between 2000 and 2001, gang-involved robberies increased by 65.4 percent during this period.

Some South Park communities are being disproportionately affected by the gang violence. As previously outlined, in 2001, two of every ten gang-related crimes in Meridian Heights were gang-related, as were three of every ten in Elm Park. Nearly half (49.4 percent) of the robberies in Elm Park in 2001 were gang-related, as were three of Meridian Heights' five murders. While this rate of gang-related violence has been the norm in Meridian Heights for the last three years, the gang-related violence in Elm Park increased 115.6 percent in 2001 over 2000. And while gang-related violence in Riverside and Smithton has remained constant or declined, there was a 67.6 percent increase in gang violence in East Hills in 2001.

Gang members readily admitted their violent tendencies. According to interviews with 104 known gang members, 76.7 percent reported being involved in assaulting or battering someone with a weapon in the past year. Similarly, 69.9 percent had threatened to attack a person without using a weapon. One-third (35.9 percent) had robbed someone using a weapon or without a weapon, one-third (35.9 percent) had assaulted someone using a dangerous weapon, and 30.1 percent had participated in a drive-by shooting.

The high level of violence actually seems to drive gang membership in the area. When known gang members were surveyed about possible causes of gangs in the community, 62.5 percent said "protection" and 57.7 percent said "power." When gang members were asked why they joined a gang, the need for protection again rated highest, with 43 percent of the gang members surveyed stating it was an important or very important reason for joining. Interestingly enough, only 32 percent of community leaders and 11 percent of residents believed that youth joined gangs seeking protection. Also, only 21 percent of community leaders and 9 percent of residents thought that youth joined gangs seeking power/status. None of the focus group parents suggested that youth joined gangs seeking power or protection.

Nonetheless, gang-involved youths' expressed desire for power and protection may be indicative of a general fear for personal safety in a community where nearly 50 percent of gang members stated that drug dealing, possession of a gun, shooting guns, threats/intimidation, and gang-on-gang confrontations were a serious to very serious problem.

When asked about how safe they felt in their communities, 74 percent of gang members surveyed claimed they did not feel safe in their communities. About 85 percent of these respondents attributed this fear directly to the presence of gangs in their neighborhoods. School survey data indicates that, depending on the school, up to 18 percent of respondents had knowledge of gang members bringing guns to school within the past six months. This finding is especially important because the perceived availability of guns (and drugs) was found to be a significant predictor of both gang involvement and antisocial behaviors.

While nearly 60 gangs were identified as operating in the assessment area during 2001, 32 of these gangs committed only one crime in the assessment area during the three years reviewed. Many (such as the Latin Kings, Kingston Cholos, and Mara Salvatrucha) are much more active in other parts of the city. Nineteen gangs were documented as being involved in between two and nine violent crimes for the same period. Ten gangs were in fact responsible for 65 percent of the community's violent gang-related crimes. These ten gangs have documented membership of nearly 400.

South Park residents expressed concern and fear about the level of gang violence in their community. While key leaders most frequently identified vandalism and graffiti as the problem caused by gangs, 52 percent of community residents saw fear for safety as a problem, followed by increased violent crime (49 percent) and increased drug crime (48 percent). In focus groups, parents echoed the sentiments of community residents, stating that increased fears in the community, and specifically fear for safety, were the significant problems caused by gangs.

Key Finding:
Low educational attainment is pervasive in South Park, and school-related risk factors seem to be a contributing influence on youth gang involvement; school failure makes area youth more vulnerable to joining a gang, keeps them involved in gangs, feeds the area's cycle of violence, and keeps gang members trapped in a cycle of poverty and unemployment/underemployment.

The Meridian Heights, East Hills, and Elm Park areas of South Park have the lowest overall educational attainment levels in the city. This low educational attainment is likely connected to unemployment and underemployment in South Park. The area's unemployment rate is significantly higher than that for the entire city, and the majority of working South Park residents are significantly more likely to work in fields requiring lower levels of education, such as manufacturing or construction, and less likely to work in technology, administrative, scientific, financial, health, or other professional fields.

The area's low educational attainment rate is evident from 2000 Census statistics, which demonstrate that 64.2 percent of the area's population over the age of 25 did not receive high school diplomas or GEDs. There is some evidence that these low educational attainment rates are not improving. Data on the number of youth graduating from Washington and Lathrop High Schools suggests that far less than half of all students graduate. (See **Table 2**.)

School problems seem to be linked to gang involvement, as 42 percent of community leaders, 41 percent of gang members and 24 percent of residents cited problems at school as a possible cause for gangs in the community. School problems were ranked as the third most likely cause for gangs in the community by focus group parents. Teachers and school staff also identified academic failure as a factor influencing gang involvement. Some teachers attributed the students' failure to "a lack of commitment to education" on the part of youth and their families.

Table 2—Graduating Class Size as a Percentage of Freshman Class Size (Four Years Earlier)

	Washington	Lathrop
Class of 1999	28.4%	38.6%
Class of 2000	31.2%	39.7%
Class of 2001	35.5%*	42.0%*
Class of 2002	37.8%*	36.5%*

One teacher noted that students failed because they did not have the social skills and/or academic skills necessary to function in the classroom. Two high school teachers saw the size of the high school as a factor. In larger schools, it is difficult for some youth to know where they belong. As one teacher observed, gang involvement is a way to "control relationships." Middle school and high school teachers and administrators agreed that the 9th grade was a particularly difficult period.

Key Finding:
The correlation between school problems and gang involvement is supported by the school survey data. An examination of this data indicated that there were three significant predictors for gang involvement in the school domain: school grades, the perception that one's grades were better than most school peers, and meaning or perceived relevance of school activities. So the lower the student's grades, the weaker the perception that the student's grades were better than those of most of his/her colleagues, and the less s/he perceived meaning/relevance in school activities, the more likely the individual was to be gang-involved.

Table 3—Class Sizes in 2000–2001				
	Lathrop High School		Washington High School	
	2000	2001	2000	2001
9th Grade	833	768	1,160	1,093
10th Grade	568	510	281	257
11th Grade	593	489	426	477
12th Grade	589	538	348	256
Total Population	2,583	2,305	2,215	2,083

Additional data further evidences the connection between school problems and gang involvement.

- One in three gang members (41.9 percent) blamed problems in school for causing youth to join gangs.
- More than half of the interviewed gang members (54.4 percent) reported that they had dropped out of school at least once, and virtually all (94.1 percent) had been suspended at least once. One in three (40.1 percent) had been expelled from school at least once.
- Gang members who have left school tend to be less well-educated. Of those youth interviewed who were not in school or not of school age, more than half (54 percent) had a 9th grade education or less.
- Gang members who reported being out of school also reported having lower grades than those still attending school.
- In at least one area high school, a large number of students are not moving from 9th grade into 10th grade. The data does not indicate why these students do not seem to be moving ahead educationally. (See **Table 3** above.)
- Almost half (49.1 percent) of the interviewed youth came from homes where either Spanish only (35.6 percent) or Spanish and English (13.5 percent) were the primary languages spoken.
- These language barriers led to school-related problems for youth. One in every seven students at Washington High School (13.3 percent) or Lathrop High School (15.3 percent) is listed as requiring bilingual or ESL educational services at the high school level.
- One in three male gang members (38.5 percent) and 75 percent of female gang members stated that getting into an educational program would entice them to leave the gang lifestyle.

Additionally, gang members tended to report fairly high levels of participation in delinquent behaviors at school. A student survey conducted with youth in South Park indicated that 15 percent of Washington High School students and around one in every ten students at Smith, Walker, and James Middle Schools reported gang members bringing guns to their schools in a six-month period. Up to one-third of students at Greater South Park schools indicated that gang members had sold drugs at their school in a six-month period.

The Assessment Report

It is suggested that the Assessment Report be organized as follows:

Section 1: Executive Summary—This section should provide a brief summary of the key findings from the assessment.

Section 2: Key Findings—Three to five statements of fact supported by multiple data sets, along with a summary of the supporting data.

Section 3: Data Sets—Answers to the questions posed in Chapters 4–7, in order, using supportive data organized in a readable fashion with tables, charts, and graphs as necessary to illustrate the data.

Section 4: Summary of Resources—This section should provide a summary of the resources in the community that address gangs and gang-related issues. The discussion should center on answers to the questions in Chapter 8 (Community Resources Data). A complete list of the agencies, organizations, and other sources may be provided as an appendix to the Assessment Report.

Section 5: Methodology—A brief description of the methods used to collect each data set during the assessment.

Even the most thorough and comprehensive assessment will remain incomplete. There will always be conflicts in the data. For example, youth may say that jobs are the biggest problem, while their parents and teachers are more worried about gang violence. Other vital data may be simply unavailable. Additionally, qualitative data that measure community members' opinions and ideas are not as accurate a basis for decision-making as hard facts, and may even be self-serving, but they help to counterbalance the qualitative data.

The Assessment Work Group should be up-front in describing the assessment's limitations.

A few guidelines apply to the report itself:

- The purpose of the report is to help the Steering Committee develop priorities in dealing with the gang problem.
- Do not leave out important findings that may not specifically address gangs. The identification of these issues is important for the overall community assessment and should be reported. For instance, although a finding on high rates of youth suicides may not directly correlate to a community's gang problem, it is still an important public health issue.

The Assessment Work Group should not think that its work is over when the report is written. It is important to satisfy the committee that all the important bases have been covered, and this may mean that parts of the assessment must be rewritten or even that further data must be collected. The willingness of the Assessment Work Group to satisfy the committee's concerns and curiosity can be an important factor in developing a consensus around the findings, though doing so can be frustrating. It is better to hold several meetings to satisfy any concerns the Steering Committee may have than to launch a major effort with stiff opposition.

Once the Steering Committee has achieved consensus around the data provided in the Assessment Report, this data can be used for planning purposes and shaping an individualized response to the community's

specific gang problems and contributing factors. A discussion of a planning process that can be used for these purposes is found in "Implementing the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model."

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