

Chapter 3. Planning for Implementation

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model is a data-driven, collaborative approach to reduce and prevent gang violence that is predicated upon having a thorough understanding of a community's unique gang problem, and the factors within families, neighborhoods, and schools that play a role in this problem. In order to implement the Model, a community must have completed a thorough assessment of the local gang problem and mobilized key agencies, including law enforcement, criminal justice, schools, social services, community-based groups, and local units of government, into a Steering Committee. Without that foundation, the Model cannot be implemented. For more information on the assessment process, please see the manual titled *Assessing Your Community's Gang Problem*.

Once a community has completed an assessment, the data should be presented to the Steering Committee, either in a single report or during a series of meetings that allow the data to be fully examined and discussed by all key stakeholders.

At this point, the membership of the Steering Committee should also be examined to ensure that necessary stakeholders are still involved and to determine whether the membership of the Steering Committee should be expanded to involve important community influencers and/or programs whose services might be essential to gang members and their families. New members should be trained on the Model and the assessment prior to joining the group.

Using the Assessment Data

The Steering Committee's discussions of the Assessment Report data will set the stage for development of the Implementation Plan for the first year of the project. Before the planning process begins, the committee members should develop a good understanding of the following:

1. Community Demographic Data

What factors in the community are affecting or contributing to local gang problems? The Steering Committee should consider racial, cultural, and ethnic aspects of the community's demographics that play a role in local gang activity, and which should be taken into consideration. In addition, cultural, economic, employment, educational, and family structure issues should be examined.

2. Law Enforcement Data

The Steering Committee should examine the law enforcement data to determine the level and extent of gang involvement in local crime problems, including the prevalent types of crimes being committed by gangs, and to determine the demographic profiles of gang members who are the most heavily involved in crime (police incident reports). These data will help to determine the target criteria for the intervention and suppression activities of the Model. The Steering Committee also needs to examine the aggregate number of gang members in the community by age, race, and gender to identify the number of clients to be served by the project (gang intelligence data). Additional data collected from the police incident reports, such as types of crimes being committed by gangs and the times/places that these crimes are being committed, should be used to plan suppression activities.

3. School Data

The Steering Committee needs to determine which risk factors are affecting local youth, particularly young people who are affiliated with gangs (from the student survey). During implementation planning, these risk factors should be matched to appropriate prevention and intervention activities. The Steering Committee also needs to examine gang issues in and around local schools, as well as school and educational factors that should be addressed through the community's implementation plan.

4. Community Perceptions

Public perceptions provide insight into how community members, including gang members, view gang activity and how gangs affect the community. Planning activities must acknowledge and address both perceptions and realities about the community's gang problem. The community's perspectives are driven both by direct experience with gang crime and by beliefs about gang crime drawn from many sources. Although police statistics might document a noticeable decline in property crime, residents of the neighborhood, if they believe they are still at risk, will think and behave in accordance with their fears. If community perceptions are not addressed, the likelihood of sustained support from the community is diminished. Both facts and beliefs must be taken into account in design of the plan. This will help establish trust and demonstrate concern for the community.

5. Community Resources

In addition to identifying the target population, target gangs, and target area, the committee should consider what resources and services are currently available. During implementation planning, the Steering Committee should be aware of gaps in services that may need to be addressed to effectively serve gang members.

The Planning Process

The Steering Committee must recognize that the process of developing the implementation plan is important. There is a tendency for some members, especially those who have been actively concerned for a long time, to begrudge time spent on planning. The lament that "all we are doing is talking and meeting" is usually coupled with a plea such as "let's just get it done because we know what the problem is." But the planning process helps to ensure that all voices are heard and that people and organizations have the opportunity to find out new ways to work together. Steering Committee members may not all know one another well or may come from organizations that do not have a history of working together. A planning process helps build group identity and unity. Having a process also provides a ready mechanism for reviewing, revising, and renewing plans periodically. The planning process does not have to be elaborate, but it does need to be clear and allow for participation.

The process must start with a clean slate; groups must be redirected from casting blame to finding solutions. Discussion should focus on responding to the problem rather than on why the problem has not been solved.

A number of key parties must be included in this process so that the targeted community will feel ownership of the plan. Elected officials and policy makers control budgets and program priorities, help generate public and media attention for this initiative, and lend additional credibility to the focus on a comprehensive and strategic approach. Alone, however, they are not a sufficient base upon which to build an effective planning process. The process must also include the formal and informal leaders of the community whose social or professional position, personal style, history of commitment to community activities, or role in neighborhood-based organizations helps shape the attitudes and behaviors of key segments of the community.

Further, planning and implementation must encourage input from a wide variety of community members to build commitment to the plan. The Steering Committee should seek participation from those directly affected by gang crime, including youth and youth organizations, cultural and ethnic minority communities, and other community members. The process must solicit their participation and provide opportunities for them to contribute as equal partners with local officials. Obviously, geographic and demographic representation should reflect the community's makeup.

The plan should be feasible, observable, and measurable. Drafting a plan that identifies clear, concrete results can be one of the toughest challenges the committee faces. The Steering Committee should reject lofty, generic language and focus on clear tasks flowing from the group's identified problems, goals, and objectives.

Step 1: Identify the Target Community and Target Population

Research and experience indicate that some gang members are more likely to be involved in crime than others; that gang activity tends to concentrate in certain geographic areas rather than be evenly dispersed throughout a community; and that, though several may be active in a community, some gangs are more active and violent than others.

For these reasons, the first step in this planning process is to identify the *target community and target population*. Narrowing and targeting the efforts of the Model ensures the best possible allocation of resources to achieve the maximum impact in gang violence reduction.

Communities should focus on targeted suppression, intervention, and prevention activities in the area of the community that is most heavily affected by gang-related violent crime. Appropriate candidates for the Intervention Team and for prevention activities should fit criteria that are data-derived. Data from the assessment will describe where the gang problem is most concentrated, the types of youth that should be the focus of project efforts, and which gangs have been most involved in serious crime.

Communities that have successfully implemented the Model have affirmed the importance of setting clear criteria for prevention, intervention, and suppression activities early in the process of Model implementation. Limited resources dictate that effort be invested where it is most likely to be beneficial.

The following questions will help guide the discussions on identification of the target community and population for implementation planning.

Target Community

1. What area(s) in the assessed community have the highest gang crime rates?

Ideally, the target community should have a population of no more than 100,000 and should be geographically contiguous. Preferably, this area would also have clear geographic boundaries and a sense of community identity. Based on assessment data, the boundaries of the target community may be adjusted to narrow or expand where the Model will be implemented. This process may require some discussion by the Steering Committee, and consensus should be obtained before moving on to further planning activities.

Target Population—Intervention

1. What is the demographic profile of gang members who are involved in violent criminal activities in the community (police incident reports)?
2. Is there a secondary population of gang youth at risk of committing gang crimes (gang member interviews, student survey)? If yes, what characteristics do they share? These characteristics might include school attendance/conduct patterns, family gang involvement, delinquent behavior, etc.

The answers to these questions clarify the focus for the primary and secondary targets of the community's intervention activities.

The criteria for intervention targets should include, at a minimum:

- Age range, gender, ethnicity, and gang affiliation based on the demographic profile of suspects in gang-related crimes and gang intelligence data.

The Steering Committee may wish to develop additional targeting criteria that narrow the prospective target population to a manageable number. Consideration must be given to factors that appear to influence the level of activity (as indicated by the gang member interviews) within the gang, such as:

- School status.
- Criminal histories.
- Family characteristics.

Youth exhibiting characteristics common to gang members who are heavily involved in criminal activity should be targeted over youth not exhibiting such characteristics. **Exhibit 3.1** contains a sample intervention target population description.

Exhibit 3.1
Sample Intervention Target Population

Primary Targets: 75 African-American males, aged 16–24, who are known or suspected gang members affiliated with the Hot Sauce Hustlers, the Tribe, the Valley Lows, and the Avenue Boys.

Secondary Targets: 25 African-American males, aged 12–15, with family members who are known or suspected gang members affiliated with the Hot Sauce Hustlers, the Tribe, the Valley Lows, and the Avenue Boys.

Target Population—Prevention

Criteria for targeting candidates of prevention activities should be drawn from an analysis of student surveys and gang member interviews that considers:

- The age at which gang members report joining (gang member interviews).
- Social factors that appear to correlate to gang affiliation in the target community (drawn from gang member interviews and the student survey), such as:
 - Family member(s) involved in gangs.
 - History of delinquent behavior.
 - History of poor academic performance.
 - Delinquent or antisocial behavior in school.

The prevention screening criteria should be based on the existence of multiple risk factors, rather than just a single characteristic.

Targeting Suppression Activities:

1. Based on police incident reports, what are the most serious crimes that gangs are committing in the target community? What action can law enforcement and other criminal justice partners take to address these crimes?

Step 2: Prioritize Problems

In combination with the key findings from the Assessment Report, the Steering Committee should begin to identify problems that gangs are *posing*, as well as issues that are contributing to these problems. A great deal of discussion and negotiation may be required for the group to come to consensus. Once the problems have been identified, they should be prioritized, using a process such as the triage system used by hospital emergency rooms, to address most serious concerns first, while simultaneously working on problems that are going to require more long-term solutions.

Category 1

Serious threats to the physical safety of community members should receive top priority and warrant immediate action. Prevention and intervention efforts will be compromised as long as these problems continue unabated.

Category 2

Problems that are perceived as threats to the safety of community members should receive medium priority and warrant a response that reassures community members that their needs are being listened to and addressed.

Category 3

Problems that are long-term and systemic in nature, and that deal with large, underlying social conditions in the targeted community, should be addressed with long-term strategies that will resolve these issues without creating new problems. These problems play a significant and contributing role in local gang issues but are not immediately life-threatening.

Category 4

Problems that pose a serious obstacle to an effective response to local gangs should be addressed with strategies that change the policies and procedures of local agencies so they are more successful in responding to gangs.

The Steering Committee should identify three to five crucial problems that must be addressed to deal effectively with the community's gang problem. While immediate suppression activities may be required to address immediate threats of harm, the problems identified for further action planning should also contain both intervention and prevention responses and should be both short- and long-term in the nature of their responses.

Using supportive data from the Assessment Report, these problems (and their underlying, related, and causal factors) should be clearly understood and described.

Some sample problem statements are provided below in **Exhibit 3.2**.

Exhibit 3.2

Sample Problem Statements

Problem Statement—Category 1

Rates of violent, gang-related crime are high in South Park. In particular, robberies have increased dramatically, comprising more than half of all gang-related crimes in 2008. These robberies have led to a significant fear for safety on the part of local residents. Nearly 40 percent of gang members report that they joined their gang for reasons of “protection/safety.”

Problem Statement—Category 3

The gang culture is pervasive in South Park. Factors contributing to gang joining include lack of immigrant assimilation, low educational attainment, lack of economic opportunity, and cultural barriers that keep young people and their families trapped in a cycle of poverty and crime.

Problem Statement—Category 4

Data collection problems have led to underreporting of the actual level and number of gang crimes within Metropolis. As many as 80 percent of gang-involved crimes were not labeled as such within the existing police incident report system, and officers report a disturbing lack of familiarity with identifying gang-related incidents when responding on scene. This has led local residents to lose confidence in the ability of law enforcement officers to respond effectively to the gang problem.

After identifying the target community and populations and prioritizing the community’s gang problems, the Steering Committee can move forward to create its action plan.

Step 3: Develop Goals and Objectives

The Steering Committee should develop goals and objectives consistent with the problems that it has prioritized and that facilitate delivery of necessary prevention, intervention, and suppression activities within the five core strategies (addressed in Chapter 4). The data from the assessment establishes a baseline against which progress can be measured, allowing for the development of clear and specific objectives.

It is necessary to identify current activities and services and/or develop new ones for each objective. These activities will provide specific tasks necessary to accomplish each objective. For each activity/service, the agency that will be responsible for delivering or designing the service, the person(s) responsible, and the time frame should be identified.

Worksheets 1–4 are provided as a framework to guide the discussion and facilitate completion of the plan. It is recommended that the Steering Committee work through these worksheets in consecutive order.

Development of the implementation plan should be built step by step. Thus, once the problems have been prioritized and the target population identified, the following actions should be taken:

1. Develop goals (three to five).
2. Develop measurable objectives for each goal.
3. Develop activities for each objective.
4. Identify target group (youth, family members, community residents, etc.) for activities.
5. Identify the agency (or agencies) responsible for the activities.
6. Identify potential barriers and a plan to overcome the barriers.
7. Identify the contact person(s) responsible for overseeing these activities.
8. Determine start and/or completion dates for these activities, or determine if they will be ongoing.

First, the Steering Committee should develop several (three to five) goal statements, based on the identified priority issues, to address during implementation of this project. *Goals* are general statements of desirable outcomes. In stating the goals, be careful to describe the desired end and not the means to the end. That is, goals should determine the overall direction of efforts and not the activities that will be implemented. Remember that goals are general, overarching statements that will guide the project. The following are a few examples of how to state a goal:

- Reduce gang-related violent crime in the target area.
- Alleviate community residents' fear of gang activity.
- Reduce targeted youth gang members' rates of school failure and poor academic performance.

Next, using **Worksheet 1** on page 17, the Steering Committee should identify one or more objectives for each goal. As used here, *objectives* are a series of specific statements that describe a desired outcome but do not provide detailed information on the process. Objectives should also state a result that can be measured at a point in time. Objective statements describe an outcome, are measurable, and set a time frame during which they will be completed or answered.

The following examples show how an objective might be stated. Note that it is possible to create these specific and measurable objectives because the assessment has created a baseline measurement of the current status of the community's gang problem.

- Reduce gang-related assaults and batteries, as measured by law enforcement crime data, by 15 percent by Month 18 of the project and by 30 percent by Month 36 of the project.
- As measured by law enforcement crime data and community residents' perceptions, reduce the level of gang-related property crime in the target area by 20 percent by the end of Year One of the project.
- As measured by self reports, reduce the involvement in gangs by gang members served by the project by 25 percent by the end of the project's second year.
- Increase the number of project youth finding and keeping jobs for at least 120 days, as measured by project records, by 25 percent by the end of the second year of the project.
- As measured by standardized math and reading test scores, increase school achievement of school-aged project youth by two grade levels by the end of Year Two of the project.

Step 4: Identify Activities and Services

Next, *activities* and *services* should be developed for each objective. **Worksheet 2** on page 18 provides a format for organizing information by activities and services related to each objective, one or more of the five core strategies, the target group for each activity and/or service, the partner agency that will provide the service, the agency or agencies and contact person(s) responsible for initiating/completing the activity, and the start/completion dates. The activities and services for each objective indicate the tasks to be undertaken to achieve that objective and should be an appropriate mix of intervention, suppression, and prevention activities and/or services. Services provided to gang members must be age and developmentally appropriate. (Some activities may actually be a mix of two or more of the core strategies). **Exhibit 3.3** provides a few examples of how activities and services might be stated:

Exhibit 3.3 Sample Activities (with core strategy identified in parentheses)

- *Train and place 25 youth in jobs in first year of project (Opportunities Provision)*
- *Provide anger-management class to project youth (Social Intervention)*
- *Provide joint police/probation patrols of hot spots during peak hours (Suppression)*
- *Offer three hours a week of tutoring in math and reading to each school-aged youth in the project (Opportunities Provision)*
- *Provide training for employers on working with target population (Organizational Change and Development, Opportunities Provision)*
- *Make participation in job training a condition of probation (Organizational Change and Development, Opportunities Provision)*
- *Inform parents of target youth of their children's gang affiliation (Social Intervention, Suppression)*
- *Provide family counseling to target youth and their families (Social Intervention)*
- *Institute community/parent patrols during school and athletic events and neighborhood celebrations (Community Mobilization, Suppression)*
- *Initiate tattoo-removal program (Social Intervention, Opportunities Provision)*
- *Modify school policies as necessary to promote academic achievement of target population (Organizational Change and Development, Opportunities Provision)*

Step 5: Anticipate Barriers

After Worksheet 2 is complete and the activities are identified, **Worksheet 3** on page 19 provides a format for identification of barriers to implementing those activities/services and a plan to overcome the barriers. Barriers include anything the committee considers an impediment to achieving the objective. Examples of barriers may include:

- A lack of staffing for new services.
- Reluctance of businesses to hire gang members.
- Existing agency regulations.
- Public perceptions about gang activity and solutions.
- Transportation issues.

Step 6: Finalize the Plan

Finally, **Worksheet 4** on page 20 links the previous three worksheets: the five core strategies, goals and objectives, activities to be performed by partner organizations, barriers, target group for activities, agency/individual initiating each activity, and start/completion dates. In short, Worksheet 4 is the implementation plan. Separate worksheets (Worksheet 4) should be filled out for each goal. Use as many worksheets as necessary.

Worksheet 1: Identifying Objectives

Goal:							
Objective 1	Desired Outcome	+	How Measured	+	Time Frame	=	Objective Statement
Objective 2	Desired Outcome		How Measured		Time Frame		Objective Statement
Objective 3	Desired Outcome		How Measured		Time Frame		Objective Statement

