

January 11, 2011

Subsequent to receiving the 2008-09 Final Report responses found elsewhere on this website, the CGJ received the following response from the Office of the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles to the report entitled: "It Is Never Too Late To Save The Life Of A Child – Reducing Youth Gangs". .

Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury
Continuity Committee 2010-11



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

November 30, 2009

Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court
111 North Hill Street, Room 204
Los Angeles, CA 90012

This letter is in response to the Report by the 2008-09 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury, *"It is Never Too Late to Save the Life of a Child: Reducing Youth Gangs"*.

The City of Los Angeles is home to the largest and most established gang population in the country with over 400 separate gangs and an estimated 39,000 gang members. In response to the need for a comprehensive, collaborative, and community-based gang reduction strategy, our Mayor launched the first ever Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development in 2007. For the past two years, we have worked diligently to support gang prevention and intervention initiatives in our designated GRYD Zones and communities with the goal of reducing gang-related crime and violence in the most gang-plagued communities in the City.

Thank you to the members of the Civil Grand Jury who compiled this information with the intent to strengthen the region's anti-gang initiatives currently in progress. Attached are our recommendations in response to the findings and recommendations specific to the City of Los Angeles, Mayor's Office.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me directly at (213) 473-7796 or you may contact Mildred M. Lopez, Associate Director at (213) 473-7798.

Sincerely,

Guillermo Cespedes, MSW
Director
Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development

**Mayor's Office Response to the
2008-09 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Report:
IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A CHILD: Reducing Youth
Gangs**

Key Findings and Recommendations:

1. Disagree. In 2008-2009, the city assumed responsibility for oversight of city wide gang reduction programs and costs.
2. Agree.
3. Agree.
4. Agree.
5. Disagree. The city has a specific tool for identifying youth who are at the highest risk of gang joining. Please refer to the Youth Services Eligibility Tool.

Response to Overall Recommendations:

1. The current city strategy was established by several bold steps: a) disbanding the programmatic structure (L.A. Bridges) that were not proven to be effective, b) consolidating the oversight of new programs under one office, and c) establishing measurable criteria for these programs. The County and LAUSD propose coordinating existing programs without evaluating the effectiveness of those programs, or disbanding its current programmatic structure. This coordination may require similar bold steps on behalf of the county.
2. This independent regional body is organizationally a good idea, however the structure of governance will likely be an issue.
3. The Director of the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction is sharing his knowledge of gang reduction efforts through the County Executive Committee, as well as placed based strategic collaboration with the County.
4. Establishing formal mechanisms for City Agencies to centrally report budgetary and performance measurement information to the GRYD Office may be a possible outcome of the GRYD Cabinet Retreat
5. Shifting Oversight of the GRYD evaluation to the City Controller's office or the CAO would place the oversight in the hands of entities that have no programmatic experience or knowledge of gang reduction efforts. This would result in a bureaucratic oversight void of expertise in gang reduction programs.

Response to Gang Prevention Services Not Being Effectively Delivered at Schools:

1. Schools provide opportunities for delivering services to individual youth, not their families. School hours, and access by community members to services during evening and weekend hours must be expanded.
2. The GRYD Office does not write a check to the school system, however 14 million dollars are provided to community based organizations that collaborate with and receive referrals from schools. These community based organizations can serve youth and families through a more flexible schedule by providing services during evening hours and weekends, when parents are most available.
3. Agree.
4. Agree.
5. Agree.
6. The city's targeted prevention strategy is directed at youth who are most "at risk of joining gangs". This has been determined to be the most fiscally responsible and evidence-based approach. It is unclear what is defined here as potentially "life changing services".

Response to School Recommendations:

1. Agree. LAUSD should expand its definition of at risk being solely academic failure, and include other risk factors. Academic failure is a relationship process meaning it includes the teacher and the student.
2. Agree that LAUSD should enter into a formal agreement with GRYD to collaborate on gang prevention curriculum development, facilities sharing, and referral generation.
3. The GRYD Office does offer in kind services to LAUSD through the prevention contractors in the GRYD zones, and through programs like Summer Night Lights.
4. Agree.
5. Aggressive school centric gang reduction efforts will require engagement of families during evening hours and weekends.
6. Agree

Corrections:

On page 144, the report states: It should be noted that the total cost for contractual services is over 17 million dollars; the first anti-gang programs will be targeted to 100 youth per zone for a total of 1200 youth. This averages about \$20,000 per youth in the startup year.

Correction: Gang prevention programs will be targeted to serve 200 youth per zone for a total of 2800 youth. 224 youth will receive services in the non-GRYD

zones for a total of 2,824 youth per year. In addition, 750 young adults will be serve in our gang intervention component.

I. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

a. Finding 1.3

There is no set of city-wide interagency goals and objectives in the City of Los Angeles that addresses gang reduction.

Response:

We agree with the finding that the City of Los Angeles does not have a defined set of city-wide interagency goals and objectives that address gang reduction.

Recommendation 1.3: Los Angeles Mayor's Office

By December 31, 2009 the Los Angeles Mayor should direct the Director of the GRYD Office to define the goals and objectives for non-GRYD City gang reduction programs.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Mayor's GRYD Office does not presently have direct oversight of departments such as the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Recreation and Parks Department, and Community Development Department (CDD) that administer gang reduction programs throughout the City. Alternatively, the GRYD Office has created the GRYD Cabinet whose primary purpose is to improve coordination and collaboration of gang reduction strategies in the City. In the coming months, we will convene a 2-day strategic planning process with both City and County leaders to establish a citywide strategic plan that delineates specific goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities of City departments and measures of accountability for gang reduction.

b. Finding 1.4

There is no current accurate functional central information resource for gang program inventory or budgetary information in the City of Los Angeles.

Response:

We agree with the finding that there is no current accurate functional central information resource for gang program inventory or budgetary information in the City of Los Angeles.

Recommendation 1.4.1: Los Angeles Mayor's Office

By June 2010, the Los Angeles Mayor should direct the GRYD Director to establish a formal mechanism for officials representing City Departments related

to gang reduction to report budgetary and performance management information to the GRYD Office.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis. The GRYD Office's clear priority has been to develop an entire repertoire of carefully defined programs designed to address the special circumstances of gangs and to capture and focus the City's scarce resources – as quickly and as effectively as possible – to the youth and neighborhoods with the greatest risk and greatest need. As mentioned earlier, the City will undergo a process that will specifically delineate goals and objectives for City departments administering gang reduction programs. Once these have been established, the GRYD Office can then explore the creation of a formal mechanism to ensure City departments are held accountable for meeting these goals and objectives.

Recommendation 1.4.2: Los Angeles Mayor's Office

By December 2009, the Mayor should direct the GRYD Director to establish and publish formal roles and responsibilities for the GRYD Cabinet members.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. We agree that the GRYD Office should work to establish and publish formal roles and responsibilities for the GRYD Cabinet members. Beginning September through December of 2009, our office will convene members of the GRYD Cabinet for a 2-day working meeting to establish formal agreements with relevant partners including LAPD, CDD, Recreation and Parks, LAUSD, etc and formal roles and responsibilities of our Cabinet members. We anticipate having the strategic plan with defined roles and responsibilities completed by January 31, 2010.

Recommendation 1.4.3 Los Angeles Mayor's Office

By June 2010, the Mayor should direct the GRYD Director to monitor outcomes and maintain and publish City-wide summary reports using performance measurement information provided by non-GRYD City Departments.

Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. The GRYD Office does not currently have the capacity or the resources to monitor departmental outcomes and maintain and publish City-wide summary reports by non-GRYD City Departments by the date provided. Although, the GRYD Office intends to issue an summary report using performance measurement information gathered by our providers on an annual basis.

c. Finding 1.5

The GRYD Office is responsible for selection and oversight of its evaluation contractor.

Response:

We agree with the finding that the Mayor's GRYD Office is responsible for the selection and oversight of its evaluation contractor, Urban Institute. The Mayor's Office issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) and subsequently executed a contract with Urban Institute in the amount of \$900,000 for the period April 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010. Urban Institute will evaluate the Mayor's gang reduction and youth development strategy, including intervention and prevention services provided by contractors in the GRYD zones and in targeted areas of need outside of the GRYD zones.

Recommendation 1.5: Los Angeles Mayor's Office

By June 2010, the Mayor should shift oversight of the GRYD evaluation contract from the GRYD Office to an independent entity such as the City Controller or the City Chief Administrative Officer.

Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. We disagree with this recommendation as the GRYD Office is the only office with the technical and programmatic expertise to oversee a thorough evaluation of current gang prevention and intervention programs. Neither the Controller's Office nor the Chief Administrative Officer have the expertise to oversee an evaluation that focuses primarily on serving the gang-involved population.

Upon moving existing gang prevention and intervention programs and funds to the GRYD Office, the Mayor committed to bi-annual audits and evaluations as conducted by the City Controller. Consequently, the City Controller has completed its first audit/evaluation of the GRYD Office (see Attachment A).

II. SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT IN GANG REDUCTION

Finding 2.1

The Los Angeles Unified School District's budgetary commitment to targeted gang reduction is essentially limited to the more broadly defined Youth Relations Unit, the total cost of which is \$1.3 million.

Response:

We agree with the finding.

Recommendation 2.1.1: The Superintendent of the LAUSD and the Mayor

The Superintendent of the LAUSD and the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles in collaboration with the GRYD Director establish an MOU in which they define a service approach that aggressively provides gang prevention

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. As mentioned in an earlier recommendation, beginning March through May of 2010, our office will convene members of the GRYD Cabinet for a 2-day working meeting to establish formal agreements with relevant partners including LAPD, CDD, Recreation and Parks, LAUSD, etc and formal roles and responsibilities of our Cabinet members. We anticipate having the strategic plan and formal agreements completed by May 31, 2010.

Finding 2.2

The Mayor's \$24 million Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) does not include any funding or in-kind services for targeted programs in the schools, including referral services for zone contractors. The only program that currently exists places intervention workers in targeted neighborhoods during commute times through Safe Passages.

Response:

For the past year, the Mayor's GRYD gang prevention providers have been working closely with LAUSD personnel in ensuring high risk youth and their families are both aware of our services and are being referred to our providers for service provision. In fact, several gang prevention agencies have established office hours at nearby elementary and middle schools to ensure referrals are continuously received and reviewed and to maintain daily contact with the youth and families.

In addition, LAUSD personnel have participated in past trainings specifically for our gang prevention providers on how to successfully partner with their local LAUSD school. Lastly, this year we launched the Mayor's Summer Night Lights Program at LAUSD's Roybal Learning Center, the first school campus to receive

such a program. We infused a total of \$180,000 to support expanded hours and programming beginning July 8 – September 5, 2009.

Recommendation 2.2.1: The GRYD Director

The GRYD Director should establish a formal relationship with the Los Angeles Unified School District, whereby roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and consider offering resources or in-kind services to students through LAUSD, as appropriate and effective.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The GRYD Office will establish a formal agreement with LAUSD whereby roles and responsibilities are clearly defined by May 2010. As mentioned in the above response, the Mayor's GRYD gang prevention providers have been working closely with LAUSD personnel in ensuring high risk youth and their families are both aware of our services and are being referred to our providers for service provision. Gang prevention agencies will continue to maintain a presence at nearby schools. The Mayor's GRYD Office will continue to engage school administrators (ie. GRYD Cabinet) and personnel in providing gang prevention and intervention services for high risk and gang-involved youth and their families.

In January 2010, the GRYD Office in partnership with the National Gang Center will be providing a Multidisciplinary Team Training that is at the core of the Comprehensive Gang Model. This team is composed of a multidisciplinary group of professionals from the fields of law enforcement, probation, outreach, education, and social services, who work together to case manage high risk and gang-involved youth and to identify additional prevention, intervention, and suppression activities needed in the target community. Participation on the Multidisciplinary Team can increase the effectiveness of each agency's efforts, reduce duplication of services, increase access to needed services, and ensure that gang members are held accountable for their actions. The team-based approach helps ensure that all agencies working with these clients have a common goal and shared strategies for each client.

Short-term goals for the team include:

- Creating individualized case management plans for individuals participating in the project.
- Engaging clients in direct services to address their specific needs.
- Working together to dismantle or surmount barriers to accessing services.
- Holding individuals accountable for negative behaviors.

Long-term goals for the team include:

- Preventing youth from joining gangs.
- Assisting gang members in transitioning out of the gang lifestyle.
- Improving the effectiveness of agencies serving high-risk and gang-involved clients.
- Reducing overall gang-related crime in the community.

The Multidisciplinary Team, or "MDT," also seeks to achieve a much larger goal. By identifying and providing concentrated services to those both at high-risk of joining a gang and within the gang culture, the team seeks to improve the quality of life for all residents of the community by reducing gang crime and improving community safety. Ultimately, the goal is to create systemic and community-wide change that will reduce overall gang involvement and criminality.

Members of the MDT will include:

- Law enforcement (ie. LAPD, City Attorney)
- Education/schools (ie. LAUSD)
- Probation and/or parole officials.
- Court staff (optional).
- Social service agencies.
- Youth-serving agencies (ie. WorkSource and OneSource Centers).
- Grassroots community agencies.
- Outreach staff (ie. Crisis Intervention Workers).

Recommendation 2.2.2: The GRYD Director

The GRYD Director should establish a policy for how zone contractors will reach out to schools for at-risk student referrals and establish a formalized mechanism by which contractors and schools will implement the referral procedure.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. By January 2010, school personnel will be participating in Multidisciplinary Teams across all GRYD zones. By May 2010, the Mayor's GRYD Office intends to establish a formal agreement with LAUSD whereby roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. In this formal agreement we will include school outreach strategies and a formalized mechanism by which contractors and schools will implement the referral procedure.