THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: October 15, 2008 REPORT NO: 08-152

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee Agenda of October 22, 2008

SUBJECT: COMMISSION ON GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION FUNDING GUIDELINES FOR GANG PREVENTION PROGRAMS

REQUESTED ACTION:

Adopt the recommendation by the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention (Commission)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the recommendation of the Commission directing the Commission to communicate to the Mayor, council, CDBG funding office and to other funding agencies and local foundations as well as those seeking funds to use the following areas of focus as guidelines for funding anti-gang programs for youth 9-17 years old and their families within the City of San Diego in the coming year:

1. Truancy intervention and prevention/Curfew support;
2. GED/High School diploma attainment;
3. Employment/work skills development (including Summer employment strategies);
4. Parent education and Family support (including Gang Violence Victim Assistance); and
5. Collaboration as a necessary strategy to better serve the communities in the City of San Diego.

SUMMARY

The Commission's purpose is to: develop a strategic collaborative effort between various agencies who work with gang related issues; make policy recommendations to the Mayor

and City Council on issues of gang prevention, intervention, diversion and suppression methods, *identify* local, state and federal funding sources, and *identify* best practice efforts; advocate, formulate, and recommend for adoptions proactive gang policies, ordinances and guidelines.

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1. Truancy intervention and prevention/Curfew support;
2. GED/High School diploma attainment;
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4. Parent education and Family support (Including Gang Violence Victim Assistance);
5. Collaboration as a necessary strategy to better serve the communities in the City of San Diego.

DISCUSSION

During the past year, the Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention has heard from the community and a variety of organizations that want to impact gang activity in the City (i.e. the City Heights Anti-Gang Task Force, LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), The Children's Initiative (San Diego County Report Card), San Diego County Mental Health and San Diego County Health and Human Services).

This funding guideline recommendation will strengthen existing coordinated efforts to impact gang issues in the City, which the Commission highlighted in its Strategic Action Plan. More specifically, the recommendation invites foundations supporting organizations serving the City of San Diego, and agencies with programs within the City of San Diego to support the Commission's efforts to impact the gang problem.

The focus areas reflect the Commission's values that every community of adults has a responsibility to nurture its young people, so they are equipped to make positive choices to succeed in life and not choose gangs or violence as a lifestyle.

The collaborative structure of the curfew sweeps, the Workforce Partnership's focus on collaborating with community based organizations, the San Diego Unified School District's focal point on employment training, the mentoring, and support of youth in schools, as illustrated by San Diego Unified School District's efforts, all are a reflection of the Commission's Strategic Action Plan Goal #1: **Establish an effective coordinated collaboration process to impact gang activity citywide.**

1. Truancy/Curfew Sweeps

Truancy and curfew sweeps have a dual effect – they encourage attendance monitoring, and they impact youth crimes during the periods of the sweep. Traditionally, law enforcement agencies apply the minimum procedures to address truancy (i.e., arrest, issue a citation), and allow the courts to impose the consequence.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Center for School Engagement are recognized for researching truancy and recommending procedures to combat absenteeism. The common element suggested by each of the organizations is collaboration. They encourage law enforcement, schools and social service agencies to work together toward intervention and prevention.

In June, the Commission voted to recommend to the City that there be a coordinated process for implementing Truancy and Curfew Sweeps.

Community based organizations have been voluntarily working with San Diego Police Southeastern Division voluntarily. Though many small grassroots organizations have stepped up to intervene and support the youth and families (and participated with San Diego Police Department in the truancy/curfew sweeps), it was clear at the sweeps that funds for even the larger organizations are needed as well for follow up, culturally competent programming and staffing.

2. GED/High School diploma attainment

According to *School or the Streets: Crime and California's Dropout Crisis* (2007):

> *High school dropouts are three and one-half times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested, and more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison. <u>According to researchers, a 10 percentage point increase in graduation rates reduces murder and assault rates by about 20 percent.</u>*

City	***Homicides Prevented***	***Aggravated Assaults prevented***
San Diego	20	1,799
Los Angeles	214	7,241

The Commission believes it is important for youth to stay in school and transition to adult life with literacy skills, work skills and the ability to make appropriate life choices. In 2002, male high school dropouts earned $23,903 a year; female dropouts earned $17,114 a year. Dropouts will earn $200,000 less than high school graduates and $800,000 less than college graduates, in their lives. Dropouts make up nearly half the prison population --75 percent of state prison inmates and 59 percent of federal inmates are high school dropouts. (*Whatever it takes: How 12 communities are connecting Out of School Youth (2005))* Supporting the many community based programs focused on ensuring youth

graduate high school is critical; we hope existing efforts (the list is very long) will be supported for a long time to come.

In July, the State Department of Education released figures showing that in San Diego Unified, over a four-year period, 22.8 percent of the Class of 2007 dropped out of school somewhere between ninth grade and graduation. Of the students who entered ninth grade in 2003 and were scheduled to graduate in 2007, 30.5 percent of African Americans and 28.7 percent of Latinos did not receive a diploma.

The San Diego Unified School District under the leadership of Superintendent Terry Grier will launch a number of initiatives in September to reduce the number of high school student drop outs and increase the ninth grade cohort graduation rate. Schools will receive additional staff and resources including a dedicated graduation coach at each high school and reduced class size in ninth grade English classes.

We believe strategies such as these and others in the community are necessary and need to be expanded and supported.

3. Employment/Work Skills Development

During the Commission's Listening Tour, young people repeatedly stated they wanted jobs. In one forum they said that not being able to work until they were 16 was sometimes the cause for them to engage in criminal behavior. Here are some key points that were made during the Listening Tour:

Lack of Jobs

- Young adult gang members at a community forum indicated that jobs with a future would be the best alternative to gangs.
- Young adult gang members want to start work at an earlier age – 14 instead of 16.
- Probation officers indicated that many of the juveniles need gainful employment in order to stay away from the gang lifestyle.
- Older gang members indicated that gainful employment was needed to support their families.

The Coalition of Neighborhood Councils' Youth Opportunity and Employment Program, funded by the San Diego Workforce Partnership, **with Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act Title I funding** helped 16 court and gang affiliated youth obtain GEDs or high school diplomas over the last year, many of whom were first generation high school graduates. Two went on to post-secondary school, and another 10 were placed in employment. All were given work readiness training.

Commissioners feel strongly that employment during the summer must be part of the City and County's youth employment efforts. All research points to the fact that when youth are involved in positive activities like jobs, there is less incentive to be involved in gangs.

4. *Parent Education and Family Support*

Many parents are unaware of the signs of gang involvement by their children. Parents in communities where there is gang violence need support and education to help them teach their children to make appropriate choices, and to cope with the trauma from community violence.

In the Commission's March meeting, Mark Foreman, Executive Director of the Family Justice Center, underscored that viewing or being involved in community and domestic violence has a negative impact on youth and their families (Adverse Childhood Experiences completed by Jeffrey Rowe, M.D. and Bruce Perry M.D.). The Commission also believes that "victims' assistance" to families victimized by gang violence also needs focused attention.

The Commission has actively worked with County Mental Health to develop a framework for a project to respond to community violence and its collateral affect within the community.

5. *Collaboration is key*

At our January 2008 summit called *Collaborations that Work*, the Commission brought together a number of collaborations working in the city to share their experiences with other community organizations. The Commission is actively involved in much collaboration itself. These collaborations are critical in answering the needs of any community:

> *The success of the Gang Violence Reduction Program in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood has demonstrated the effectiveness of multi agency coordination and integration among youth services (including street outreach), police, probation, parole, grassroots organizations, and corrections in controlling and redirecting serious and violent gang members.*
>
> *Preliminary positive results from other multi agency programs provide further encouragement that serious and violent youth gang crime can be controlled, if not reduced. Narrower strategies, such as combining police and probation surveillance, have also shown some promise but have not yet been evaluated rigorously.*
> *(http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/summary_2000_8/recommendations.html)*

We would hope *any* funder would insist that being part of a collaborative or creating a collaborative as a key part of an application for funding.

We see the Safe Passage at Montgomery Middle School, the Safe Way Project in Southeast, the San Diego High School Multi-agency collaboration, the LISC projects in Colina Park and others across the city (Southeastern Collaboration, ICAN and the Anti-

Gang Task Force) as critical in building the momentum needed to impact the gang issues in these communities.

FOLLOW UP

If approved, the recommendation will be communicated to agencies via a letter from the Chair of the Commission to local foundations and organizations.

Lynn Sharpe-Underwood
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