Youth Gangs

Gangs have an adverse impact on youth and communities across America. Over the years, youth gangs have become increasingly complex, lethal, and resistant to control. Sustainable solutions must involve comprehensive approaches that contain the spread of gang activity, protect youth who are most susceptible, and hold those engaged in gang violence appropriately accountable.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP’s) anti-gang initiatives help communities implement comprehensive, data-informed strategies to combat youth gangs.

Programs

OJJDP’s anti-gang portfolio combines prevention, intervention, and suppression programs to help identify and address the root causes of youth gang activity within affected communities. These programs are based on the core components of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model.

Grantees work to change community members’ attitudes regarding violence, provide youth with alternatives to gang membership, and educate them about the risks of gang involvement. OJJDP also funds services—including mentoring, life skills training, and substance abuse counseling—for gang members who want to desist from gang activity.

OJJDP funding helps communities gather and share data about their gang problem so they can develop effective strategies to suppress youth gangs and sustain reductions in youth violence.

The Office also funds programs to support youth victims of gang violence. Youth who experience violence are susceptible to behavioral and mental health challenges, including perpetrating violence in the future, substance use, depression, academic difficulties, and suicide. OJJDP funding helps service providers identify, treat, and seek justice for victims.

Training and Technical Assistance

The National Gang Center provides information, training, and customized technical assistance to help communities address their unique gang problems. The center offers an array of resources, including the Strategic Planning Tool and the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model—a proven framework for coordinated action that helps communities prevent youth from joining gangs and reduce street gang violence and crime.

For More Information
