

NATIONAL GANG CENTER

NEWSLETTER

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Volume 2

Gangs in School

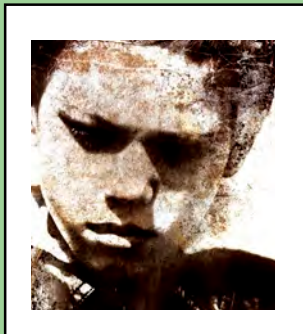
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The National Gang Center (NGC) is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. NGC conducts research on street gangs and serves as a clearinghouse for individuals and agencies seeking information, technical assistance, and training in the areas of gang prevention, intervention, suppression, and reentry.



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When Gangs Come to School

Gang affiliation is not something that students leave behind when they enter the school building. In recent years, roughly one-in-five middle- and high-school students reported the presence of gang activity in their school (<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/iscs12.pdf>). This survey also found these numbers are even higher among students in urban schools, where the presence of illegal drugs is also more widely reported.

Because of the potential conflicts between gangs and gang members, it is vital for school administrators in gang-affected areas to formulate plans to address gang activity in and around their school campuses.

Recommended action steps include the following:

Action Step 1: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of gang activity around the school campus.

Schools should work with law enforcement to obtain information about gangs in the community. Other types of information to assess include student demographics and performance data, student behavioral incidents, and local risk factors affecting students. Conducting a survey can identify areas of concern to school personnel.



Schools also should identify available services and partners that can assist students and families. A guide for conducting a gang assessment, developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), is available at <http://s.iir.com/jxSqN2Av>.

Action Step 2: Develop a continuum of prevention and intervention activities based on student needs.

The Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) curriculum can help students develop skills to avoid gangs (<http://www.great-online.org/>). Convening a multidisciplinary team to help gang-involved students is also effective (<http://s.iir.com/qCXDREJm>). The OJJDP Strategic Planning Tool, <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT>, provides information on effective prevention and intervention programs for 6 to 17 year olds.

Action Step 3: Develop appropriate policies to control gang behavior on campus and at school events.

These policies should prohibit gang-related clothing, paraphernalia, graffiti, and conduct, but it is important to avoid overreacting or underreacting to gang-involved students and, if possible, to maintain their involvement in school.

Action Step 4: Train school personnel to identify and respond to gang issues.

School personnel cannot respond to gang activity if they do not recognize it. Schools can



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Civil Gang Injunctions—Part 2

A civil gang injunction (CGI) is a preliminary or permanent court order issued in a civil case against a criminal street gang and its members to enjoin (prohibit) certain behavior within a defined safety zone—which may include associating together in public and violating trespass and curfew laws. The goal is to abate a public nuisance caused by the conduct and activities of a gang. A public nuisance is an unreasonable interference with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property that affects an entire community. CGIs are most effective against a multigenerational turf-based criminal street gang with deep roots that openly commits criminal and nuisance activity in its own turf.¹

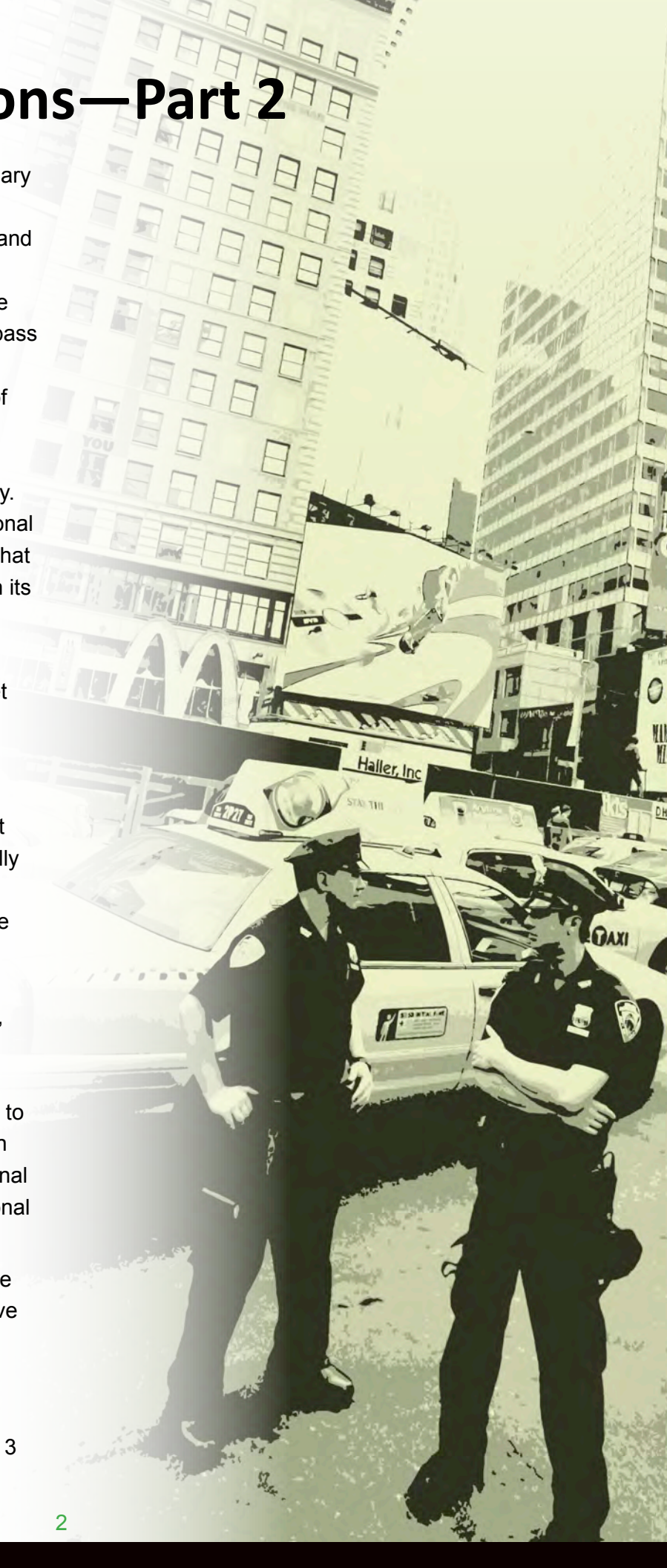
CGIs have proven effective in reducing the criminal and nuisance activity that criminal street gangs cause. So why doesn't every jurisdiction dealing with gangs either have a CGI or start working on one?

CGIs require a significant time investment at the outset for law enforcement officials, especially attorneys. If gang officers have gathered intelligence on criminal and nuisance activity, the law enforcement agency will have most of the information needed. However, if the gang unit spends most of its time working on suppression, extra law enforcement personnel time may be needed to obtain a CGI. Another obstacle for most jurisdictions is that gang prosecutors need to dedicate as long as a year to obtain a CGI. If an attorney working on obtaining a CGI has additional job responsibilities, he or she will require additional assistance from law enforcement personnel.

For a CGI to be effective, it needs to be done and enforced correctly, and, most important, have the correct target. One challenge jurisdictions face in obtaining a CGI is properly defining the civil defendant. It is important to remember that

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¹See Civil Gang Injunctions, NGC Newsletter, Vol 1, Winter 2013



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this is a fact-based inquiry. For example, one injunction in Los Angeles, California, had a safety zone (the area where the injunction was effective) composed of turf that the Shatto Park clique or subset of the 18th Street gang claimed. 18th Street is a Southsider or Sureño gang, meaning it owes its allegiance to La eMe, also known as the Mexican Mafia. In that case, the civil defendant was the 18th Street gang because the facts showed that 18th Street gang members from many different cliques moved through and operated in that area, but that other Southsider gangs did not “caper” or commit crimes with 18th Street. In southern California, with rare exception, the correct defendant is the “neighborhood,” be it Temple Street, Rockwood, or Big Hazard, all Southsider gangs. In other parts of California, typically northern California, the proper civil defendant might be all Sureños collectively, if the local facts show that Southsiders from different neighborhoods operate together under the Sureño umbrella. The proper civil defendant in a Norteño case might be the neighborhood by itself or Norteños collectively. Again, it is a fact-driven inquiry. Ask the law enforcement officers, “Who are you seeing together in a car?” What is correct in one area may be incorrect elsewhere.

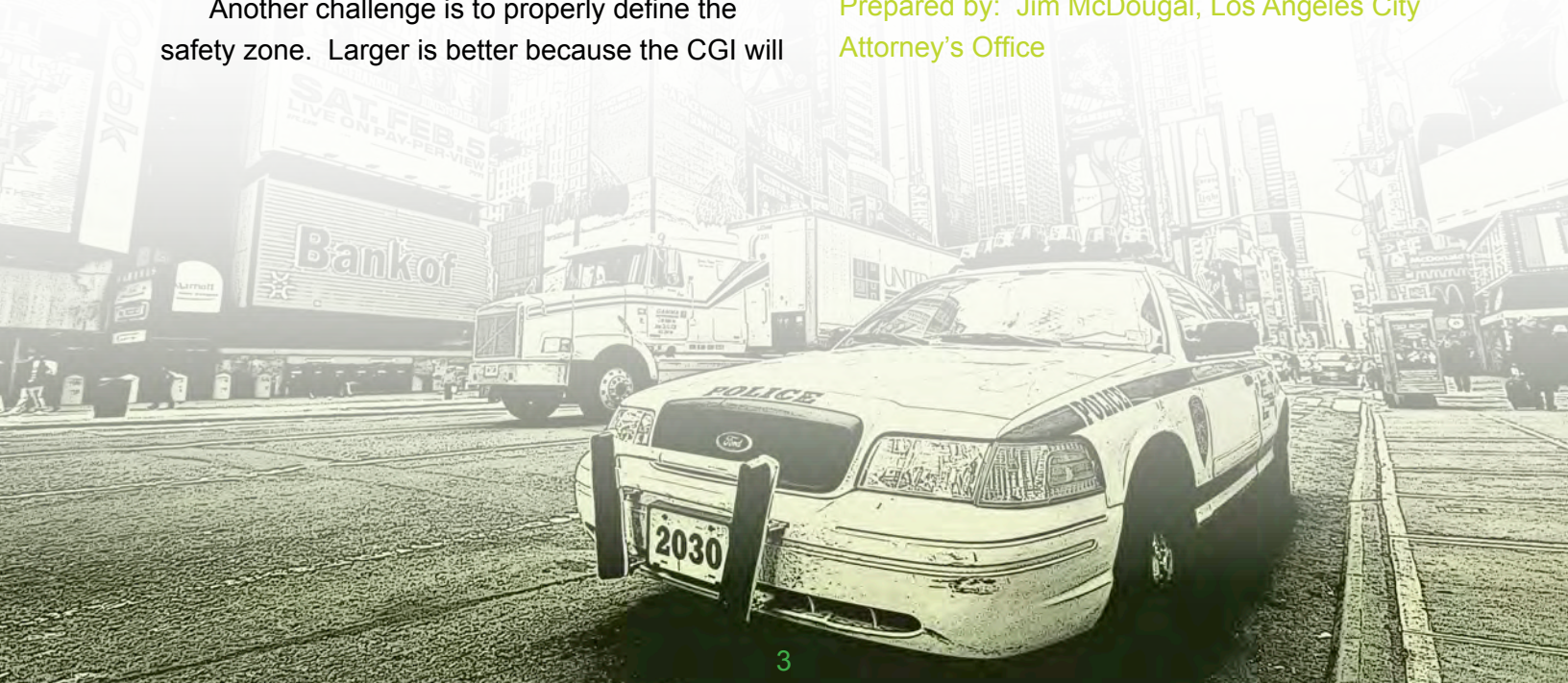
Another challenge is to properly define the safety zone. Larger is better because the CGI will

protect more area. However, it is not sufficient for gang experts to opine that they believe a gang will move into a new area. Most street gangs in Los Angeles and other large California cities have intimidated local residents for decades. These deeply rooted gangs are surrounded by equally deeply rooted rival gangs, which prevent the target gang from moving. If there is insufficient evidence of existing criminal and nuisance activities, the court may decline to grant the injunction. As a result, a CGI is not a good tool to use against a newly formed or newly arrived gang, which might move in response to a CGI.

Another challenge that CGIs pose is that they need to be executed and enforced correctly. Given the increasing litigation against CGIs over the past five years, networking must be done with successful CGI attorneys and law enforcement officers who are currently working in this field. The best lessons can sometimes be learned from projects that have stumbled.

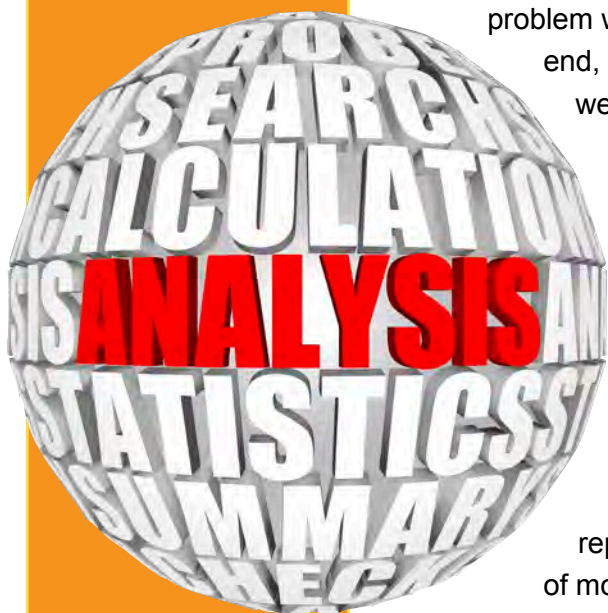
What works for one area at one time might not be the solution for another area at another time. Let’s work hard to learn from each other and make the next CGI even better. ■

Prepared by: [Jim McDougal, Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office](#)



2011 National Youth Gang Survey Analysis

National Gang Membership Counts— and Where These Estimates Come From.



Where do national estimates of gang members come from? How are these estimates counted, tallied, and generated? These are important questions. These numbers are necessary for context of the overall gang problem and can provide a reference point to high-profile events reported by the media. To continue to move forward collectively and prudently on how to address gang activity, we continually need to have an understanding of the size of the

problem we face. To that end, in this segment

we provide a brief discussion of how the National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) collects national estimates of gang membership and what they say.

The NYGS is a survey of a representative sample of more than 2,500

law enforcement agencies across the nation and includes all large cities and counties where gang activity is primarily and historically concentrated. Since 1996, each agency has annually reported the presence and size of local gang activity, including the number of active gang members, in its jurisdiction. This latter emphasis is especially important so as to avoid duplicate information

that other agencies report, such as adjacent police departments or county sheriffs' departments. Other important considerations for gathering complete and more precise information are (1) high response rates—the average response rate in the NYGS is 85 percent for all area types—and (2) data that is dependable and valid—two recent independent evaluations have found NYGS data to be highly reliable.

NYGS staff then compile the data into a database, and through rigorous statistical techniques, they make estimates for the nation as a whole. By including agencies across different types of areas and collecting data from them each year, the precision of national estimates is increased greatly and estimates are as accurate as possible. Further, this method minimizes widely fluctuating estimates and produces more stable and usable results.

The figure below displays national gang member estimates derived from the NYGS through the end of 2011; this is the most current data, since data for the 2012 calendar year is presently being collected and analyzed. On average, law enforcement agencies report around 750,000 gang members throughout the nation, and in the most recent years, this estimate has approached, but not exceeded, 800,000. Providing

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Survey Analysis

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further assurance of the accuracy of these estimates, these figures have fluctuated by less than 5 percent from the 10-year average over the past decade.

Everyone, from government and law enforcement officials (federal, state, and local) to the broader general public, relies on numbers to be informed about ongoing concerns. In the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, for example, offenses reported to police agencies are compiled and published annually. It is through this careful and sustained measurement process that we may gain dependable insight and

knowledge about national problems, including our national gang problem.

For more information about the NYGS, including newly published findings, please visit:

<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis>.

When Gangs Come to School

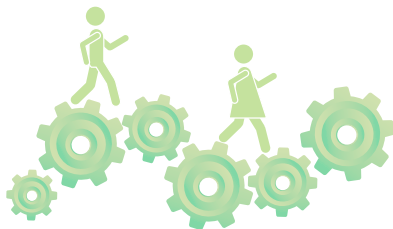
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partner with law enforcement to provide regular training on local gang trends and also should train personnel on school policies and effective management of student behavior.

Action Step 5: Engage community partners to help with gang prevention and intervention.

Schools can work with community partners to expand their reach with high-risk youth and families.

You can find more information on these action steps at <http://s.iir.com/hft4W3AN>.



OJDP Strategic Planning Tool



The Strategic Planning Tool (SPT) was developed to assist communities in assessing delinquency and gang problems and in developing solutions to deal with them. Four sections of the SPT are described below.

1. Planning and Implementation

The SPT user is provided with access to a database containing descriptions of numerous gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs; strategies and best practices; as well as delinquency prevention and intervention programs. Programs in the database were reviewed using several criteria outlined in the tool and designated as “effective” or “promising.” These programs, strategies, and practices can be selected to fill in coverage gaps or be compared with existing local programs.

2. Risk Factors

This tool provides an annotated description of research-based risk factors for delinquency by age range and risk factors, which are correlated to

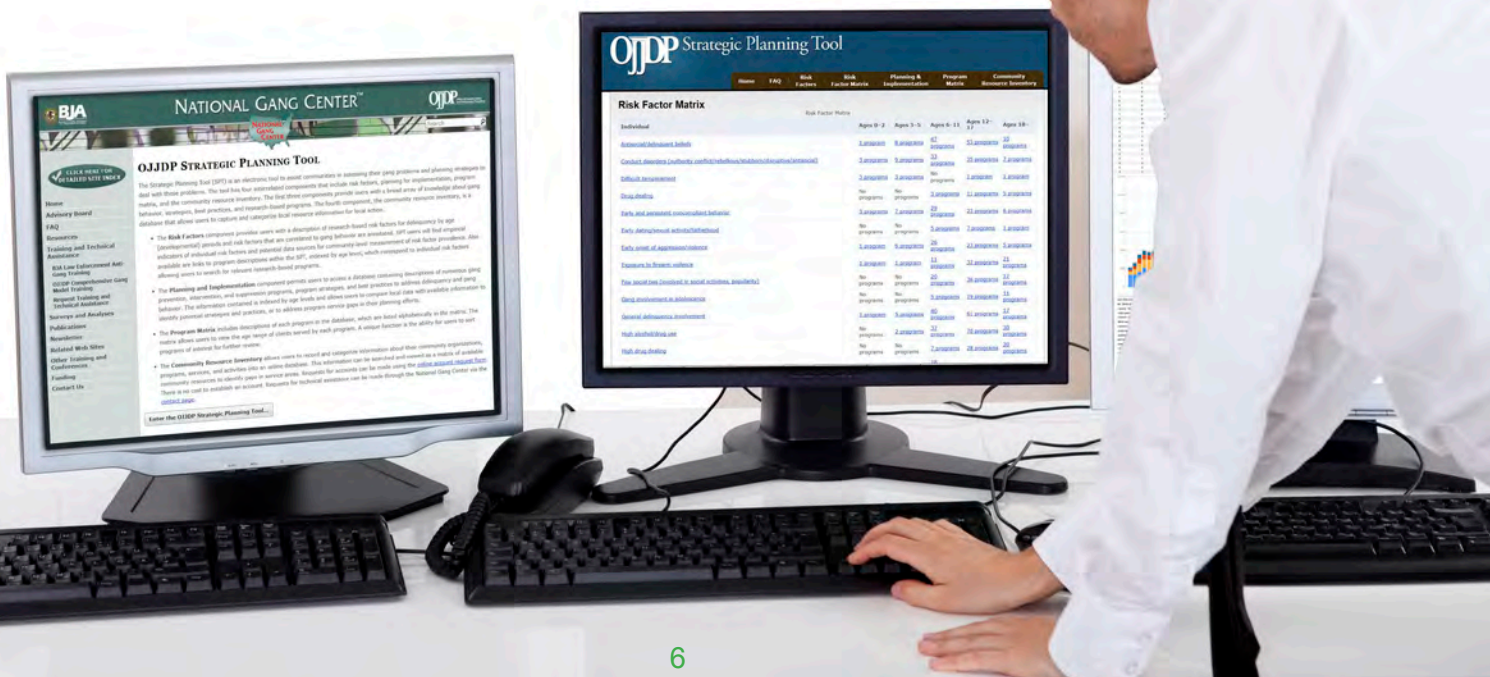
gang behavior. Empirical indicators and data sources are provided for community-level assessment.

The FAQ answers questions about risk factors, while the program matrix lists programs that address individual risk factors.

3. Program Matrix

All programs in the database are listed alphabetically in the program matrix. This matrix allows users to view the age range of clients served by each program in the database. Users can examine a description of each program by clicking on the program name.

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OJJDP Strategic Planning Tool

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4. Community Resource Inventory

The community-specific section of the tool allows the user to inventory and record information in a password-protected database about local organizations, programs, services, and activities. These resources can be incorporated into a collaborative, comprehensive community-focused approach. 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?* In addition, users may explore a demonstration community within the SPT. To access the SPT site, please visit <http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT>.

For assistance with the SPT, please contact Steve Ray at (850) 385-0600, extension 229, or by e-mail at sray@iir.com. 



Interested in Anti-Gang Training?

Check out the links below for dates and locations:

Training and Conferences

<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/About/Other-Training-and-Conferences>

Law Enforcement Anti-Gang Training

<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Training-and-Technical-Assistance/Law-Enforcement>



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