

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO REDUCING GANG ACTIVITY IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

The nexus between gangs and violence is well documented and reducing the impact of gangs in our communities has been a focus of federal, state, and local law enforcement. Examples of this effort locally include a number of state-funded California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) projects¹, as well as federal efforts to target gang and gun violence.

In the City of San Diego, CalGRIP has taken the form of a multi-agency project involving the San Diego Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention, San Diego City Park and Recreation Department, United Methodist Urban Ministry (METRO), and San Diego Police Department (SDPD). These agencies are providing prevention, intervention, and suppression activities in neighborhoods dealing with high incidents of gang and gun crimes (Central and Southeast Divisions of San Diego City). Specifically, three Park and Recreation Centers have extended their hours from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday evenings to offer a safe and positive environment to youth in the Memorial, Mountain View, and Southcrest communities. METRO, a local community-based organization, is providing case management to youth identified at greatest risk for entering or increasing involvement in gangs. Finally, SDPD is supporting each of these efforts by providing a police presence at the Centers on Friday nights, making home visits with METRO, and conducting gang-related, targeted-led intelligence operations in the identified areas.

In addition to the over 3,200 visits by community youth to the three Centers during the extended hours, METRO has provided services to 56 at-risk youth, and the SDPD has reported a decrease in gang-related crimes in target areas. More specifically, while gang-related crimes decreased by 18 percent in the City of San Diego between 2008 and 2009, the gang-related crime dropped by 55 percent within a .2 mile radius of the three targeted Park and Recreation Centers. (Table 1).

Table 1
Gang Crimes Decreased in Targeted CalGRIP Communities

Target Areas	2008	2009	Percent Change
	Gang-Related	Gang-Related	
Recreation Centers	11	5	-55%
Central Division	66	56	-15%
Southeastern Division	123	94	-24%
Total SDPD	448	369	-18%

SOURCE: SANDAG; CalGRIP Data 2010

While funding for this particular project ends September 2010, additional CalGRIP grants are expected to be released in the upcoming year. As such, measuring the impact of the project will be valuable in applying for future funds. More on the final project outcomes will be available on the SANDAG Web site at www.sandag.org/cjc at the beginning of 2011.

¹ Since 2007, the Cities of Chula Vista and Oceanside, as well as San Diego, have received CalGRIP funding. Additional CalGRIP funds were provide to several community-based agencies in the north and south regions.