

YOUTH GANG PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Youth Gang Hotline
Gang Unit Exit Strategies
Youth Gang Resource
Center

Year 2 Final Evaluation Reports (July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006)

Prepared by

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for

Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council
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Alliance for Human Services

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Preface

In 2003, the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council hosted the first Gang Summit to address challenges and safety issues posed by youth in gangs. As a result of this effort the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council (DMCJC) made funds available through the Alliance for Human Services for a 3 year (2004-2007) pilot countywide Gang Prevention Initiative. Services are intended to be comprehensive and target youth who are gang involved and their families. Initial service objectives are intended to¹:

- Increase community awareness about local gangs, gang culture, and the efforts in place to decrease the number of gang involved/affiliated youth;
- Provide referral, case management, and therapeutic services for gang involved youth and their families;
- Advocate for additional funding and services that address youth gang issues;
- Provide training to youth workers and social service providers addressing gang culture and promising practices within the field;
- Research and evaluate gang services programming;
- Convene community forums to assess sanctions, services, and community initiatives that seek to reduce youth involvement in gangs;
- Build and facilitate collaborative relationships with community members and law enforcement officials.

Three pilot programs were designed to accomplish these objectives and constitute a network of services: (1) The Youth Gang Hotline, (2) the Gang Unit Exit Strategy Service (GUESS), and (3) the Youth Gang Resource Center. This evaluation report documents the implementation and program outcomes of the three pilot programs for the second year of operation.

¹ Source: *Blueprint Report Miami-Dade County Responds to Youth Gangs*, 2003.

Each individual evaluation report begins with an overview of the grantee organization and the youth gang program being evaluated. The methods and procedures used to conduct the evaluation follow. Finally, a discussion of the findings and overall recommendations conclude each report. The Reports are presented in the following order:

- Section 1: The Youth Gang Hotline
- Section 2: Gang Unit Exit Strategy Service (GUESS)
- Section 3: The Youth Gang Resource Center

SECTION I: THE YOUTH GANG HOTLINE

The Grantee Organization

Established in 1968, Switchboard of Miami is a private, non-profit, multi-service agency whose mission is to “link human needs with community resources.” To accomplish this mission, Switchboard provides the Miami-Dade community with comprehensive hotline services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services include crisis counseling, suicide prevention, and information and referral. In addition, the agency offers free individual and family counseling, as well as school based prevention programs for youth and their families in high risk situations.

The Program

The Youth Gang Hotline provides information and resources that assist gang involved youth, their family members, and other community members to obtain the knowledge and services needed to exit a young person from a gang or end gang affiliated relationships. The key objectives of the Youth Gang Hotline are to:

- Establish and maintain a hotline service for youth, their families, and other community members that provides information about youth gangs and referrals to community services that will assist youth in leaving or avoiding gang affiliation;
- Promote the Hotline service in schools and the Miami-Dade community; generate a minimum 250 calls during year 2.
- Compile current information about youth gang services in order to maintain and expand the Hotline database;
- Provide training to hotline personnel.

To achieve these objectives, the activities and services of the Youth Gang Hotline include: (1) 24 hour access to information and referrals for callers seeking assistance, and referral follow-up; (2) a database of gang related services and programs; (3) promotion of the Hotline in the community; and (4) training of Youth Gang Hotline personnel.

Evaluation Methods and Procedures

The evaluation of the Youth Gang Hotline has several immediate and longer-term objectives, which include the following:

- Assessing the extent to which the Youth Gang Hotline is providing the services and activities outlined in the NOFA²
- Developing an understanding of program operations and implementation strategies;
- Providing a context for interpreting program service outcomes;
- Aiding the Youth Gang Hotline staff and the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council in analyzing implementation issues and program activities that may contribute to resulting program outcomes
- Providing information to revise and improve the pilot design.

Data for the evaluation were compiled from program reports, conversational interviews with program staff, quarterly program assessments, and direct observation of Hotline operations during sites visits. The agency's progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in the NOFA is documented in a Continuous Quality Improvement Assessment (CQIA). The CQIA for the Youth Gang Hotline is completed quarterly by the evaluator, in collaboration with the program staff, and describes the extent to which major objectives are achieved.

The evaluator met with Switchboard of Miami's staff to collect data and observe services. A total 9 site visits were conducted during the year and 30 evaluation service activities occurred (i.e. technical assistance, interviews, and data collection). These data are discussed in the process evaluation findings presented in the following section of the report.

² Source: Continuing CBO Priorities NOFA, *Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention*, February 5, 2004, Published by the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council and the Alliance for Human Services

The Youth Gang Hotline Services

The Youth Gang Hotline received approximately 564 calls during its second year of operation (Table 1). Hotline calls are classified into three general categories: (a) gang involved, (b) gang prevention, and (c) other. Twenty two percent (22%) of hotline calls involved youth who were in a gang. Hotline counselors typically engage callers who are gang members in “counseling” conversations intended to assist the youth in problem solving. In addition, Hotline counselors facilitate dialog between the youth and an external service provider. Many callers (73%) request information about local gang prevention programs, or seek information to increase their awareness about youth gangs within the County and gang culture in general (27%). Few callers (2) to the Hotline have asked for information about leaving a gang.

Table 1 Youth Gang Hotline Calls 2005 – 2006		
Services Item	Units	Ratio by Category
Gang Involvement (22%)		
Counseling Services	75	60%
Case management	26	21%
Tattoo Removal	15	12%
Gang Violence	7	6%
Gang Exit/Relocation	2	2%
Gang Ex-offender Program	1	1%
<i>Total</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>100%</i>
Gang Prevention (16%)		
Prevention Programs	67	73%
Community/Awareness/Education	25	27%
<i>Total</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>100%</i>
Other (61%)	346	
Total number of calls	564	

Data compiled from *YGH Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 funding year.

The volume of calls in Year 2 more than doubled the Year 1 total (272) and exceeded the goal of 250 unduplicated callers. The increased call volume in Year 2 compared to Year 1 suggests that Switchboard has made some progress in its effort to increase the community's awareness of the Youth Gang Hotline. In fact, the Youth Gang Hotline has been incorporated into the organization's overall marketing plan.

At the same time, however, it is of concern is that a large proportion of calls to the Youth Gang Hotline were classified as "other" (61%), which includes crank calls, wrongs numbers, or callers in need of information unrelated to youth gangs (Table 1). Efforts are currently underway to reduce calls in this category, particularly crank calls. Staff suggests that promotion efforts may need to be assessed in order to identify the most effective strategies for reaching the targeted youth.

An additional challenge encountered is the refusal of most callers to receive follow up contact or services. As a result, Switchboard of Miami's ability to assess the impact and efficacy of Youth Gang Hotline services is hindered.

Community Outreach and Program Promotion

Switchboard of Miami continued to leverage internal resources to improve its capacity to promote the Youth Gang Hotline.³ In collaboration with its Family Service Program, hotline services were marketed directly to local high schools and other organizations within the community. Promotional activities took place at over 150 presentations and community events involving more than 14,000 participants.

In addition to inter-departmental collaboration, the agency also includes the Youth Gang Hotline in its Helpline marketing plan. This further supports the organization's effort to leverage resources for outreach and marketing. This positions the Youth Gang Hotline to receive the same level of attention as other larger or more utilized hotline services within the organization. In addition, the outreach marketing plan informs staff efforts to identify the appropriate target audience for the Youth Gang Hotline service.

Through its collaborative relationship with the Youth Gang Resource Center, information about the hotline continues to be disseminated as

³ In the Year 1 Report questions were raised regarding long term efforts to conduct street and community outreach given the level of funding made available for the hotline service.

follows: 1) Hotline information is posted on the center's website; 2) Hotline cards are included in information packets distributed by the center; and 3) The hotline's logo and phone number is prominently posted on the cover of the gang services reference guide.

Additional efforts to market the Youth Gang Hotline include participation in the Annual Youth Gang Summit sponsored by the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council and leveraging local media outlets when gang-related articles appear. Such efforts often prompt follow-up articles which include information about the Youth Gang Hotline.

Referral Database and Documentation

Through its collaborative relationships with a range of community agencies, Switchboard of Miami has made significant gains enhancing its referral database. In contrast to year one where nine new service providers were identified that work with gang involved youth and their families, in the second year of the hotline's operation over 30 additional service providers were identified and added to the referral database. Additional providers appear in Table 2 and are compiled from Switchboard's monthly reports to the Department of Human Services.

Table 2: Services Providers Added to the Referral Database 2005 – 2006

Service Providers	
5000 Role Models of Excellence	Non-Violence Project (Funded by the Children's Trust)
City of Miami Family Involvement/Outreach Program	North Miami Beach Police Department Gang Resistance Education and Training Program
Communities in Schools Alternative to Suspension Program (PanZou)	Positive Attitudes
Creative Youth (Miami-Dade County Youth Crime Task Force)	Positive Youth (Alliance for Human Services)
Developing Intelligent Voices of America (DIVA)	Six Rounds to Success Program (PanZou)
Drug Free Communities Coalition	Strengthening Families Program (PanZou)
Drug Free Youth In Town (DFYIT) Program	Th After School Program (operated by the Human Community Services Agency)
Family Empowerment (Alliance for Human Services)	The Mentoring Resource Center
Four Out of School Programs (names not listed)	The World Literacy Crusade of Florida Alternative to Suspension Program
Improving Community Control (Miami-Dade County Youth Crime Task Force)	The YMCA and Greater Miami After School Program
JCS Youth Academic Support Service Program	Touching Miami with Love Children's Programming
Life Skills Center of Miami	Urban League Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention Program
Man Up Program (PanZou)	West Grove Boys and Girls Club
Manners and Etiquette (Dade Community Foundation)	YMCA Problem-Solving Workshops and Homework Assistance Programs
Miami-Dade College Reach-Out Program (Crop)	You and Me Mentoring Project

During the 2005 – 2006 Switchboard of Miami began using a new on-line database system called *Tapestry*. This database has three essential uses: (1) Documenting client hotline contacts (access restricted to staff members); (2) Maintaining and accessing Switchboard's service referral database (access restricted to staff and service providers for the purpose of updating the referral database); and (3) Making the referral database available to the community (access available to the general public). Moreover, while The Children's Trust is contracted (i.e. owns the license) to use the software, *Tapestry* is available to all service providers under contract with them.

To access the *Tapestry* system each user has a password and user ID which provides them with a different level of access. Helpline counselors access the system and document service activity using an On-line Support Assistant (OLSA) screen. Table 3 summarizes the types of information gathered. Efforts are currently underway to develop a periodic report which will specifically document service data for the Youth Gang Hotline.

Table 3: Items Documented in the On-line Support Assistant Screen

Items Documented	Points to Consider Regarding the Youth Gang Hotline
The name of the caller	Youth Gang Hotline callers generally remain anonymous
How the caller would prefer to be contacted for follow up services	Many Youth Gang Hotline callers refuse follow up services. If they agree to be contacted by Switchboards staff, they may restrict the times they may be contacted or require that a pseudonym be used when contacted.
How the request for helpline services was made	Most hotline service requests are made via telephone or email.
Type of request made by the caller	This field identifies if the callers want help for him or herself, or wants to help another person.
The caller identification	This field documents if the callers is a client, client relative, client representative, or service provider.
The referrals provided to the client	Up to five referrals may be provided to a client; however, the staff indicates that three are usually provided.

Items Documented	Points to Consider Regarding the Youth Gang Hotline
A support consultation narrative (presenting problems)	This field documents the services that were provided to the caller. Narratives are generally in an outline format and are written using SOAP documentation guidelines.
The referral category	This field describes the client's general area of need. Youth Gang Hotline callers are generally categorized as "gang violence" or "juvenile delinquency."
The length of the contact is documented	Such data allows Switchboard to compare the length of contacts from one hotline service to another. For example, the Youth Gang Hotline may be compared to other youth hotline services.
The call type	This field documents which hotline the caller used.
The type of contact	This field documents if the call was a referral or crisis call.
The age of the caller	This field documents the age of the caller, and is primarily used for clients.
Follow up activity	For crisis calls follow-up occurs within 24 hours. For referral, calls a maximum of three follow up calls are attempted.

Source: Interview data compiled February 2006.

Program Staffing

More than 50 helpline counselors provide staff support to Switchboard's various helpline services. Helpline counselors consist of paid staff, volunteers, and interns. As summarized in Table 4, Volunteers make up the largest ratio of Helpline counselors (51%); 24% of the counselors are full time employees, and 6% are part time employees. On-call staff (16%) and interns (4%) account for the remainder of the staff.

Table 4: Hotline Staffing

Table 2 Helpline Counselors Fiscal Year 2005 – 2006		
Full-time employees	13	24%
Part-time employees	5	9%
On-call Employees	9	16%
Volunteers	25	45%
Interns	3	5%
Total	55	

Helpline counselors are scheduled into three shifts: Shift 1 is from 7:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Shift 2 is from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and Shift 3 is from 8:00 PM to 6:00 AM. Each shift requires a staff complement that is culturally diverse, and fluent in English, Spanish, and Creole. Switchboard primarily looks to its employees for language coverage, and requires each volunteer and intern to contribute a minimum of 3.5 hours each shift. Of the three shifts, the first shift has the most counselors available and receives the greatest volume of calls Monday through Friday. Call volume decreases on weekends and nights and fewer Helpline Counselors work these days.

Staff observes that the frequency of certain types of calls changes over the course of 24 hours. Daytime callers typically request information and referral services, while overnight calls are usually crisis oriented, (i.e. the caller is experiencing some form of psychological or emotional trauma). Given the variability in the type of calls that are received, new counselors usually work the morning shift where staff support is greatest and the type of calls received easier to handle. Overnight counselors are generally more experienced, and possess the skills necessary to provide services to crisis calls.

Training

Switchboard's volunteer hotline operators are required to attend 65 hours of training, which includes 45 hours of instruction and 20 hours of training on the telephones. During the 2005 – 2006 year, Switchboard trained 15 volunteers and staff members.⁴ The general training (referred to as Core Training) is intended to:

- Familiarize volunteers and hotline staff members with the various referral and support lines offered by the organization;
- Allow participants an opportunity to critically reflect upon workshop topics within the context of their own lives;
- Present each content area (i.e. gang affiliation, youth development, sexual assault, suicide, etc.) and how the issues may impact the life of a caller;

⁴ Data compiled from *Youth Gang Hotline Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

- Train volunteers how to apply intervention services using the Rogerian Therapy Model⁵;
- Teach the proper protocols for operating the phone lines.

During the hotline's second year of operation, revisions have been made to the training curriculum related to the Gang Workshop Session. The goals of this workshop include:

- Participants learn the appropriate responses to the type of calls most frequently received on the Youth Gang Hotline;
- Participants increase their familiarity with gang culture (including names and symbols);
- Increasing volunteer awareness and sensitivity regarding the manner in which they interact with gang affiliated/involved youth and their family.

The gang training workshop has been expanded from a one hour session to a four hour session. Handout material and other workshop content has been updated and revised with regard to the service network and information relevant to gangs and gang affiliated youth in Miami-Dade County. Role play activities have been added to the training to allow participants an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the session and give trainers an opportunity to assess participant skill level as well as their cultural and social awareness regarding gang affiliated youth. A final item that has been added to the training is a speaker's panel which concludes the training session, and allows participants an opportunity to ask questions that have emerged as a result of the training process.

A review of participant feedback, as compiled from a sample of the Final Core Training Survey, suggests that participants benefit from the training. The average satisfaction score was between the range of 8 and 10 (1 being least satisfied and 10 being most satisfied), and participant comments indicate that they enjoyed the role-play activities.

⁵ The Rogerian Therapy Model guides service providers toward focusing on a client's immediate and conscious experience and acknowledges that clients have the ability to overcome challenges and/or social barriers that they encounter.

Program Implementation Summary

During the Youth Gang Hotline's second year of operation, Switchboard exceeded its call volume goal of 250 unduplicated calls. In addition, the organization successfully leveraged resources and built collaborative relationships internally and externally which increased its capacity to promote the hotline and expand its referral database. In the area of staff and volunteer training, the gang workshop session has been expanded and its content revised. There was also an improvement in Switchboard's data management capacity with the installation of a new database system, *Tapestry*. Furthermore, the core NOFA standards were accomplished.

Table 5: Summary of NOFA Performance Standards

NOFA ITEM	OUTCOME
The Youth Gang Hotline provides information to callers regarding youth gangs in Miami-Dade County.	NOFA standard met
The Youth Gang Hotline is promoted in schools and other places.	NOFA standard met
The service provider maintains current information regarding gang information and services within Miami-Dade County.	NOFA standard met
Training regarding local gangs and gang culture are provided to hotline staff and volunteers.	NOFA standard met
The service provider cooperates with the independent evaluator.	NOFA standard met

Youth Gang Hotline Evaluation Recommendations

- A periodic service activity report should be developed to provide additional detail regarding the services and resources provided to Youth Gang Hotline Callers.
- Efforts should be made to further clarify the type of youth targeted by the Youth Gang Hotline in their marketing and promotion efforts.
- The number of crank calls should be documented to ascertain the ratio of these calls per the overall call volume.

SECTION II: GANG UNIT EXIT STRATEGY

This report documents the implementation of the Gang Unit Exit Strategy, (GUESS) during its two years of operation. The first part of the report includes an overview of the grantee organization and the objectives of the GUESS pilot program. A discussion of the program's implementation follows with a description of the methods and procedures, the findings and recommendations.

The second part of this report provides information relevant to the participant data collected during the evaluation period. The data collection processes are described first, and followed by a discussion of the preliminary findings with respect to participant outcomes.

The Grantee Organization

Established in 1945, The Children's Psychiatric Center, Inc. (CPC) provides mental health services to children and their families throughout Miami-Dade County. Services include: outpatient therapy, on-site therapists in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, prevention and education programs, day treatment, and residential foster care programs. The agency has several program sites and is one of the largest providers of mental health services in Miami-Dade County.

The Program

The Gang Unit Exit Strategies Service program (GUESS), currently housed in CPC's Kendall office provides comprehensive case management and home-based counseling services to gang involved youth and their families. The overall goal of GUESS is to provide youth and their families with the tools and support to aide a young person's exit from a gang or end gang-affiliated relationships. A client can receive GUESS services for a period up to 3 months. The program's objectives include:

- To provide services to 60 clients
- To provide assessment, case management, and in-home therapy services to youths and their families
- To facilitate tattoo removal for youths as requested
- To provide support in helping client families to relocate

A program coordinator and two case managers staff the GUESS program. GUESS services were initially delivered from CPC's North office, but moved to agency's South office to serve South Dade's relatively underserved communities.

Evaluation Methods and Procedures

Evaluation Design. The general evaluation questions to be addressed over the three-year period of the program are as follows:

- What is the model and design of the program?
- How is the program implemented? What are the results of implementation strategies and activities?
- Who does the program serve and how do participants view the program?
- What are the contexts in which the program is carried out?
- What are the outcomes and impact of the program for youth and their families?

Evaluation Goals. The evaluation of the GUESS program's implementation has several immediate and longer-term objectives that include the following:

- Assessing the extent to which GUESS is delivering the interventions as outlined in the NOFA⁶;
- Developing an understanding of program operations and implementation strategies;
- Providing a context for interpreting program outcomes and effects;
- Aiding the GUESS staff and DMCJC in analyzing implementation issues and program activities that may contribute to outcomes; and
- Providing information to revise and improve the original program design.

⁶ Source: Continuing CBO Priorities NOFA 2 2004-2007, *Youth Gang Prevention and Intervention*, February 5, 2004, Published by the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council and the Alliance for Human Services.

Program Implementation Data Collection Procedures. Data for the process evaluation are compiled from program reports, conversational interviews with program staff, quarterly program assessments, and sites visits. The agency's progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is documented in a Continuous Quality Improvement Assessment (CQIA). This instrument is completed by the evaluator in collaboration with the program staff and describes the extent to which major objectives are achieved.

Implementing the evaluation plan as originally conceived was not possible given the various changes made to the program's design, oversight, and operations during the second year. Nevertheless, 13 site visits were conducted and additional evaluation services included technical assistance, conversational interviews, and data collection (47 units).

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation challenges faced by the GUESS program in Year 1 continued during Year 2 and resulted in the program altering its design and geographical target area. To begin with, the program continued to encounter difficulty providing mental health services to gang-involved youth. In addition, case managers were unable to adequately follow-up on referrals made to the program and questions were raised regarding the GUESS staff members' training and experience with gang-involved youth. In addressing these and other implementation issues, a new Program Coordinator was assigned to the GUESS program in November 2005. Additionally, the program's operations were relocated from CPC's offices in North Dade to their facility in South Dade.

During this process, the evaluation team was unable to compile post-survey data to assess participant outcomes, as there were no participants to assess. As a result, the evaluation team focused its efforts on providing technical assistance to inform efforts to restructure the program. For example, meetings were held with the various stakeholders responsible for the oversight and funding of GUESS services. Moreover, process evaluation efforts shifted away from documenting program operation to ascertaining CPC's capacity and commitment to maintaining the GUESS program.

In March of 2006, the evaluation team sent a memorandum to the secretary of the Miami-Dade Criminal Justice Council and CPC's senior staff. The memo summarized the challenges encountered in implementing the GUESS program as documented in Year 1 and Year 2 data. The memorandum provided the following recommendations in relation to restructuring the programs' services:

- CPC should identify the steps that can be taken to improve GUESS' capacity to respond to referrals made to the program.
- CPC should assess the program's capacity to provide mental health screenings and services to gang affiliated and involved youth.
- CJC and CPC should reassess the current expectations of the mental health services as specified in the NOFA.

Efforts to Improve Service Capacity. In order to improve the program's capacity to meet the goal of providing assessment, case management and therapeutic services to 60 clients, and its ability to collaborate with service providers within the network, the Program Coordinator sought to accomplish the following:

- To revise the program's policy and operational framework to improve the support and supervision of case workers;
- To revise the program's case charts and forms to guide and standardize the documentation of services;
- To assess and clarify GUESS' mental health service model (i.e. determine if the Functional Family Therapy Model was appropriate to use with gang affiliated youth or, instead, should a Family Empowerment Model or individual therapy model be used);
- To develop a plan to inform and guide case management collaboration efforts with other youth gang programs such as Project IMPACT and Panzoo; and
- To develop a plan to train therapeutic and case management staff to work with gang affiliated youth and their families.

To inform this process the evaluation team provided technical assistance to aide strategic planning efforts by developing tools to guide the process. Additionally, the findings from the Year 1 report were discussed within the context of the service challenges encountered by the program.

Strategic Planning Efforts. During the months that followed very little progress was made developing a strategic plan to modify GUESS' operations and build its service delivery capacity. In part, this was the result of the Program Coordinator having dual roles within the gang services network which included coordinating the Annual Gang Summit. While the case charts were revised and clients were still being referred, identified, or enrolled into the program, there was little indication to suggest that case managers routinely followed-up with clients enrolled in the program. Additionally, it was unclear if clients received tattoo removal or relocation assistance services.

Referral Issues. With respect to referrals, questions were raised regarding the timeliness of the program's case managers in following-up with prospective clients. At the same time, only a small amount of

referrals were received from agencies and organizations within the service network.

Interviews conducted with administrators in the service network suggest that ongoing communication with GUESS case managers was difficult due to limited access (phone only and no email access). There was also concern that the GUESS case managers were frequently ineffective in following up on referrals to the program. One administrator shared an instance where 10 referrals were made to GUESS during the fall of 2005 which resulted in only three clients receiving a formal contact or some form of service from GUESS. It is unclear what factors may have contributed to the lack of follow-up and subsequent service delivery. The essential point to consider, however is that in instances where collaboration took place, service providers expressed frustration or dissatisfaction with efforts to coordinate with the GUESS program.

Program Implementation Summary

CPC has struggled to fully implement the GUESS pilot program during the past two years. Thus, the GUESS program has been unable to fully meet the core service standards outlined in the NOFA.

OUTCOME EVALUATION: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The outcome evaluation plan is designed to focus primarily on the impact of services for participants who complete the GUESS intervention and for whom pre and post survey results are available. However, the program was unable to submit participant data consistent with these criteria. As a result, the discussion that follows is based upon data from baseline measures and program records.

Data Instruments, Measures, Procedures and Issues

These descriptive data are based upon the information from instruments described below:

Youth Enrollment Record. This instrument compiles basic demographic information about participants and is used to describe the youth in the program. These data are also analyzed to determine the relationship, if any, of participant characteristics and program outcomes. This instrument is administered when a youth is enrolled into GUESS.

Pre and Post Survey Instruments. Specially designed surveys are used to measure client outcomes in relation to program services. These instruments examine youth perceptions about school, peer and family interactions, and GUESS services. The pre-survey instrument is administered when a participant is enrolled into the program, and a post-survey is administered once a youth successfully completes the program or discontinues services.

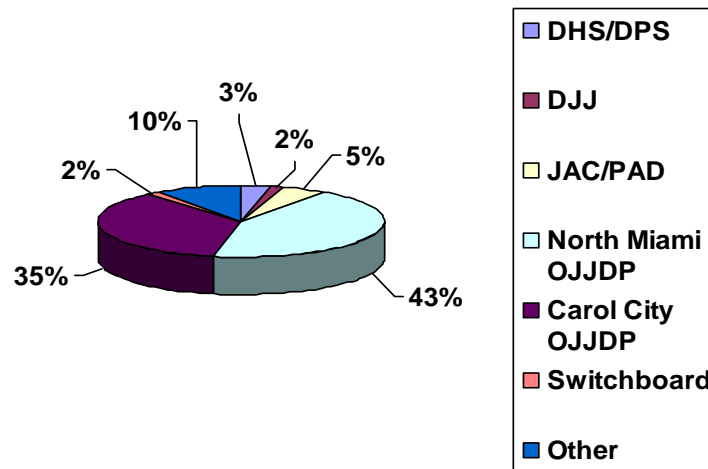
Issues. As previously mentioned, challenges encountered by CPC in fully implementing the GUESS program, impeded the data collection efforts for the outcome evaluation. While baseline data was collected during the second year of the evaluation, the outcome evaluation was discontinued during the last six months.

Findings presented herein summarize all of the client data compiled for Years 1 and 2 of the program. This includes referral information and socio-demographic information as well as pre program scores on measures for: (1) Attitude toward school, (2) Attitude toward gangs, (3) Family bonding, (4) Conflict at home, and (5) Friends delinquent behavior. The program was unable to submit post program data for any of the participants.

Client Referrals

During the two year period, 62 referrals were made to the GUESS program. Referrals were primarily received from the North Miami Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (43%) and the Carol City Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (35%). Twelve percent (12%) of GUESS referrals were received from other sources including the JAC/PAD, DHS/DPS, DJJ, and Switchboard of Miami. The remaining referrals (10%) were provided by miscellaneous organizations classified as other (Graph 1).

Graph 1
Client Referral Sources (n= 62)



Client Demographics

Demographic information about the youths in the GUESS program is shown in Table 5. The majority of clients receiving services from GUESS are boys (88%), and 50% of the clients are African American. Hispanic (34%) and Haitians (15%) youths make up the remainder of the client population.

Most of the youths were born in the United States (93%), and were between the ages of 14-17 (77%). In relation to school enrollment, 88% of the youth attend school and most (74%) are in high school.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of GUESS Participants (n= 62)

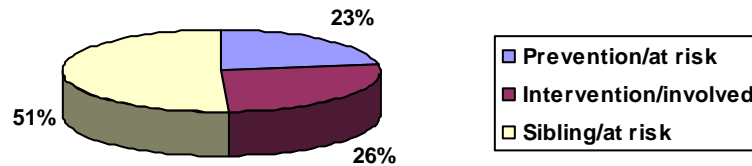
		Number of Youths	Percent
Gender	Male	55	88.7%
	Female	7	11.3%
Ethnicity	African American	30	50.0%
	Haitian	9	15.0%
	Cuban	10	16.7%
	Other Hispanic	11	18.3%
Age Groups	10 to 13	2	3.2%
	14 to 17	48	77.4%
	18 to 21	12	19.4%
Primary Caregiver	Both Parents	15	26.3%
	Mother only	21	36.8%
	Father only	4	7.0%
	Mother + Other	9	15.8%
	Father + Other	2	3.5%
	Grandparents/Other Relatives	3	5.3%
Children in Household	Other	3	5.3%
	0 to 3	52	85.2%
	4 to 6	8	13.1%
Language Most Often Spoken at Home	10 and over	1	1.6%
	English	33	55.0%
	Creole	3	5.0%
	English/Creole	5	8.3%
	Spanish	7	11.7%
Years in US	English/Spanish	12	20.0%
	Over 4 years	4	100.0%
Attends School	Yes	55	88.7%
	No	7	11.3%
School Type	Middle School	12	20.7%
	High School	43	74.1%
	Other	3	5.2%

A slightly larger proportion of youth live exclusively with their mother (36%), however many are cared for by both parents (26%). Most of these young people (85%) live in households where there are less than three other children, and English is the primary language spoken in the home (55%). Eleven percent (11%) of youth lives in households where Spanish is spoken exclusively and 5% live in Creole speaking households. The remainder of the client population lives in households that are bilingual in English and Spanish (20%) or English and Creole (8%). All of these youths were either born in the U.S. (93%) or have lived here more than four years.

Reasons for Referral

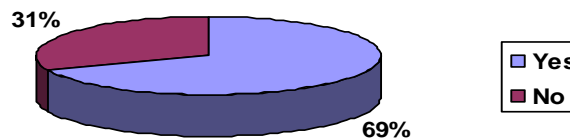
Referrals were made to GUESS for youths who were either involved in a gang, were a sibling of a gang member, or whose peer relationships with gang members made them at high-risk for involvement. As seen in Graph 2, slightly more than half of the youths, (51%) had siblings that were gang affiliated, and 23% were friends of gang involved youth.

Graph 2
Reason for Referral (n= 57)



Youth who were gang involved accounted for 26% of the referrals. In Year 2, the proportion of youth who indicated that they were members of a gang increased by 13 percentage points when compared to Year 1 data. A large percent (69%) of youth referred to the program have been involved in criminal activity (Graph 3).

Graph 3
Criminal Involvement (n= 55)



Pre Test Survey Data

Table 6 summarizes pre test data for both Year 1 and Year 2. The scores are based on the following measures and criteria:

- **Attitude toward School (Denver Youth Survey):** The scale ranges from 0 to 5, with higher scores indicating more positive attitude toward school.
- **Attitude toward Gangs:** The scale range is 0 to 6. Higher scores indicate a more positive (accepting) attitude toward gangs.
- **Family Bonding:** The scale range is 0 to 6. Higher scores indicate more bonding within the family.
- **Conflict at Home:** The scale range is 0 to 6. Higher scores indicate more conflict at home.
- **Friend's Delinquent Behavior (Adolescent Attitude Survey):** The scale range is 7 to 28. Higher scores indicate greater exposure to friends who engage in delinquent behavior.

Taken together, these baseline measures indicate that GUESS clients enter the program with somewhat positive attitude towards school (mean = 3.68). Youth report above average bonding among their family members (mean = 4.14) and low levels of conflict within the home (mean = 1.70). Attitude towards youth gangs, and peer group delinquency continue to provide the most intriguing pieces of data. Youth report having a less accepting attitude toward gangs (mean = 1.70); however, they indicate having above average exposure to friends who engage in delinquent behavior (mean = 15.86).

Table 6: Pre-test Survey Scores

Measure	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude toward School	50	.00	5.00	3.68	1.36
Attitude toward Gangs	47	.00	6.00	1.70	1.48
Family Bonding	49	1.00	6.00	4.14	1.52
Conflict at Home	51	.00	6.00	1.70	1.81
Friends' Delinquent Behavior	45	9.00	25.00	15.86	3.43

Few of the youths participated in the proposed intervention for any period of time. As a result, the program was unable to obtain post-test data.

GUESS: Summary and Recommendations

Over the last two years, CPC has struggled to implement the GUESS program in accordance with the NOFA standards and expectations. Table 7 below summarizes the results of CPC's efforts.

Table 7: Summary of NOFA Performance Standards

ITEM	OUTCOME
The program serves 60 youths/families for a period of three months or until the gang member is successfully out of the gang.	NOFA standard not met
The GUESS Program conducts assessments for every family and gang member enrolled into the program.	NOFA standard partially met
The program provides case management services which include the provisions of referrals for family members as may be appropriate.	NOFA standard partially met
The program provides in-home family counseling services at least once per week during the three-month cycle of the program.	NOFA standard not met
The program facilitates free tattoo removal.	NOFA standard partially met
The program provides guidance when relocation is required.	NOFA standard partially met
Activities and services are documented in each client case file.	NOFA standard partially met
The staff is appropriate for serving the target population (i.e. they speak the language with which the client and family is most comfortable, and they have experience working with the target population).	NOFA Standard Not Met
Program staff cooperates with the independent evaluator in the collection of participant enrollment forms, service documentation, pre/post measures, interviews, etc.	NOFA standard partially met

Thus, if efforts are made by CPC to continue services that target gang involved youth, consideration should be given to the following:

- Organizational strengths and barriers that may impact the ability of CPC to provide therapeutic services to gang involved or affiliated youth;
- Improving the capacity of staff to work with gang involved youth and their families;
- How CPC will build clearly defined and functional collaborative relationships with organizations within the gang services network;
- Assessing how a therapeutic service model (whether FFT, FEP, or individual therapy) responds to the specific service needs of gang involved youth.

While it is always the hope that a new service endeavor will be successful, pilot projects often fall short of intended goals. In this instance, there is an opportunity to examine the lessons learned so that efforts to provide appropriate models of services to gang involved youth in the future, can be enhanced, and improved.

SECTION III: YOUTH GANG RESOURCE CENTER

This report documents the implementation of the Youth Gang Resource Center during its second year of operation. Following the introduction, the report provides an overview of the grantee organization and objectives of the Youth Gang Resource Center. The methods and procedures used to conduct the evaluation follow, and then the findings of the evaluation are presented. The report concludes with overall observations and recommendations.

The Grantee Organization

Established in 1945, The Children's Psychiatric Center, Inc. (CPC) provides mental health services to children and their families throughout Miami-Dade County. Services include: outpatient therapy, on-site therapists in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, prevention and education programs, day treatment, and residential foster care programs. The agency has several program sites and is one of the largest providers of mental health services in Miami-Dade County.

The Program

The Youth Gang Resource Center responds to community demand for a clearinghouse of information on current policy, funding, and service initiatives taking place that address the youth gang issue at the local, state and national levels.⁷ A major goal of this pilot program is to increase community awareness regarding youth gangs and serve as a nexus of information regarding community resources and services. The key objectives of the Youth Gang Resource Center are to:

- Provide a community awareness and prevention education campaign about youth gangs;
- Provide training about youth gangs to youth workers and social service providers;
- Seek additional funding support for anti-youth gang activities;
- Establish cooperative relationships with other stakeholders and attend relevant meetings.

⁷ Source: *Blueprint Report, Miami-Dade County Responds to Youth Gangs*, 2003.

Major activities to accomplish these objectives are as follows: (a) A Youth Gang Community Awareness and Prevention Education Campaign, (b) workshops and trainings, (c) advocacy for additional programming and funding to support youth gang prevention and intervention services, and (d) forging collaborative relationships with local law enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders. Youth Gang Resource Center services are intended to inform and build the capacity of community members and organizations to implement strategies and services to decrease youth gang involvement.

The Youth Gang Resource Center is housed at CPC's offices in North Dade. A program director conducts the activities of the Resource Center.

Instruments, Measures and Procedures

Data for the evaluation were compiled from program reports, conversational interviews with program staff, quarterly program assessments, and direct observation of program activities during sites visits. The agency's progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFAP) is documented in a Continuous Quality Improvement Assessment (CQIA). The CQIA for the Youth Gang Resource Center is completed quarterly by the evaluator, in collaboration with the program staff, and describes the extent to which major objectives are achieved.

Over the program year, the evaluator met with the program's staff several times to collect data and observe services. More specifically, a total of 10 site visits were conducted during the year, and 23 evaluation service activities (i.e. program observations, interviews, and data collection) were provided. Technical support services were also provided, including the compilation of data, the entry of data, and the analysis of Year 2 workshop and training feedback data.

PROCESS EVALUATION: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The process evaluation of the Youth Gang Resource Center pilot program describes the extent to which goals and objectives have been achieved during Year 2 of the program. Observations and issues for consideration are included.

Community Awareness and Prevention Education

The community education activities are designed to provide the public with general information about youth gangs. Three approaches are used to accomplish this objective: 1) Distribution of information packets; 2) Website information; and 3) A resource library.

Information Packets. The Youth Gang Resource Center coordinator interacted with over 1,900 community members and distributed over 626 information packets during the second year Community Awareness and Prevention Education Campaign (and 500 in Year 1).⁸ The information packets contained: 1) A brochure about the Youth Gang Resource Center; 2) Information regarding community programs that work with gang affiliated and/or involved youth (including; Project MPACT, The GUESS Program, Panzou, The Youth Gang Hotline); 3) A parent's quick reference guide on recognizing and preventing gang involvement; 4) Information regarding the Multi-Agency Gang Task Force (MAGTF); 5) Relevant newspaper articles discussing community efforts to reduce gang violence; 6) Fact and tip sheets about gang involvement, how to avoid becoming a part of a gang, and how to exit a gang; and 7) A parent's information guide (published by the Youth Gang Resource Center).

Information packets were distributed to human service organizations, schools, hospitals, local and state government offices, local private community groups, and law enforcement agencies. For example, information packets were usually distributed at the Youth Gang Resource Center workshops, presentations, and community events. Efforts were made by the staff to update articles and other reference material included in the packets.

⁸ Source: Data compiled from *the Youth Gang Resource Center Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 funding year.

Feedback to the staff about the information packets has been positive. Recipients find the information useful, relevant to their needs, and accessible.

Youth Gang Resource Center Website. Another important access point in distributing information about youth gangs in Miami-Dade County is the Youth Gang Resource Center's website. The website received about 260 visits during its first year of operation and more than 300 visits in Year 2. The intent of this website is to:

- To increase community awareness that a gang "situation" exists in Miami-Dade county and that efforts to address the problem are underway;
- To distribute information about community resources available to gang affiliated youth, their families, and/or youth workers;
- To serve as a point of contact between members of the community and the Youth Gang Resource Center via email correspondence;
- To post the information regarding the Youth Gang Hotline.

Website content continues to be updated to include information and links regarding gang services and resources. The staff reports that the website has prompted requests for information from individuals and organizations outside of the region and the State of Florida. Such a level of access further informs and connects the local gang service network to other national efforts.

The Youth Gang Resource Center Library. The third component of the Youth Gang Resource Center's Community Awareness and Prevention Education Campaign involves the development of a Gang Resource Library. At the conclusion of the first funding year, reference material and videos had been obtained; however, the library had yet to be brought completely on-line and made available to the community. During year two of services, reference material and other media has increased by 116 items and been made available to the community.⁹

The Youth Gang Resource Center's coordinator has worked closely with law enforcement and human service providers to maintain current

⁹ Source: Data compiled from *the Youth Gang Resource Center Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 funding year.

and relevant information regarding local gang data and services available to the community. Data compiled from the monthly report suggests that professionals within the gang services network, law enforcement and other human services providers (both locally and nationally) primarily access information from the Youth Gang Resource Center's Library, typically by telephone. Once a request is made, the information will be e-mailed, picked up or delivered.

Workshops and Trainings

Training activities address the varied needs of organizations and providers who work with or may encounter gang involved youth. Trainings are targeted to educators, human service providers, and law enforcement personnel.

Twelve (12) workshops and trainings were conducted during Year 2 (and 13 in Year 1) attended by more than 100 individuals. Five (5) trainings were provided to human service providers, schools received three trainings, law enforcement or criminal justice agencies were the recipients of two trainings, and one training was provided in a hospital setting. Training topics included: 1) Overview of the Gang Services Network; 2) Gang 101 – An Introduction to Gangs; and 3) Gang Awareness and Reduction.¹⁰

Several steps are taken to ensure training workshops are appropriate and relevant for a particular group. The Youth Gang Resource Center coordinator assesses what an organization wants their workers to know. Once this effort is completed, the coordinator assesses the knowledge participants have about gangs, and identifies their concerns regarding gang involved youth. With this information, training content is adapted or enhanced.

The approach to presenting information during workshops is also influenced by the knowledge base and demographics of the participants in the group. In instances where parents are the primary participants, training content is presented using a discussion format to develop a deeper understanding about gangs and gang affiliated youth.

To assess the effectiveness of training sessions, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of the session. Participant

¹⁰ Source: Data compiled from *the Youth Gang Resource Center Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 funding year.

feedback, as documented in over 100 workshop questionnaires, suggests satisfaction with the content, information delivery, and overall quality of the workshops presented by the Youth Gang Resource Center. The Youth Gang Resource Center coordinator indicated that participants (especially parents and school personnel) appear satisfied with the training content, and respond favorably to information intended to help community members identify signs of gang involvement.

Interestingly, the training participants have requested that former gang members be included in the workshop sessions so that a first hand account of gang affiliation can be provided. Currently such an effort is beyond the capacity of the Youth Gang Resource Center. However, collaboration with other service providers within the gang services network may help facilitate and or broker opportunities for gang involved youth to share their experiences with community members at trainings.

In some instances, adequate time was not allocated for the training. An average training session takes approximately two hours. However, in instances when only one hour is available content has to be abbreviated. In addition, the facilitator's ability to obtain feedback from participants and respond to their questions may be truncated.

Advocacy for Funding

The Youth Gang Resource Center has continued efforts to enhance funding and other resources for the Center. In collaboration with other organizations, eight proposals were developed during the current funding year for additional program resources.¹¹ In addition, the Youth Gang Resource Center helped organizations to find services within the community that could be beneficial to their clients. An example of such an activity was the Youth Gang Resource Center's work with the GUESS program in identifying a physician who could provide free tattoo removal services to clients.

Service Network Collaboration

The Youth Gang Resource Center continues to collaborate with a variety human service and law enforcement agencies. The requirement to collaborate with MAGTAF has been removed from the Youth Gang

¹¹ Source: Data compiled from *the Youth Gang Resource Center Monthly Progress Reports*, submitted to the Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services during the 2005-2006 funding year

Resource Center's contract since meetings of the organization are restricted exclusively to law enforcement personnel. Instead, the Youth Gang Resource Center has attempted to strengthen relationships with law enforcement agencies to coordinate and co-facilitate community trainings.

The Youth Gang Resource Center worked with law enforcement personnel to implement trainings and presentations in high schools. These activities include facilitating site visits and meetings, and coordinating workshop arrangements with school personnel. Information regarding the types of gang issues at a particular school site is provided to the law enforcement agency conducting the presentation so that the content of materials can be modified to respond to a school's specific needs.

The Youth Gang Resource Center's work with local law enforcement agencies has also focused on identifying promising prevention and intervention practices to decrease gang and criminal activity in targeted areas where gang activity is prevalent. Furthermore, the Youth Gang Resource Center is strategically working with various agencies to improve local reporting capacity to identify youth encountered in the street or processed in the criminal justice system that are gang involved. Such efforts are documented in a 2004 - 2005 Law Enforcement Focus Group Report published by the Youth Gang Resource Center in 2006. Over 50 copies of this report were distributed to the Dade-Miami Criminal Justice Council, the Alliance for Human Services, and the Youth Crime Task Force.

Collaborative efforts within the human service network primarily focus on distributing information about programs (such as the Youth Gang Hotline), data or research findings communicated in recent reports and articles, and updates about print and television media coverage of issues or information related to youth gangs. In addition, the Youth Gang Resource Center has collaborated with service agencies to improve their service delivery capacity by assisting to develop proposals for funding to augment current (or establish new) services. The Youth Gang Resource Center has also referred gang affiliated or involved youth to agencies within the service network.

Youth Gang Resource Center: Summary and Recommendations

The Youth Gang Resource Center has successfully met the basic requirements of the NOFA (Table 8). For example, the Youth Gang Resource Center's community education campaign distributed over 600 information packets and the project coordinator interacted with over 1,900 community members at local events and presentations.

Table 8: Summary of NOFA Performance Standards

NOFA Items	Outcome
A community awareness and prevention education campaign is conducted about youth gangs.	NOFA standard met
Training about youth gangs is provided for youth workers and social service providers.	NOFA standard met
Additional programming and funding is actively sought to support anti-youth gang activities.	NOFA standard met
Establish cooperative stakeholder relationships.	NOFA standard met
The program cooperates with the independent evaluator.	NOFA standard met

Additionally, the Youth Gang Resource Center's library was made available to the public during the second year of operation, and its reference materials expanded greatly. Furthermore, 12 workshops were conducted and eight proposals for funding were developed in collaboration with other organizations. Finally, the coordinator continues to build strong and well defined collaborative relationships with human services and law enforcement organizations.

Youth Gang Resource Center: Recommendations

- The content of training workshops should be modified to accommodate workshop sessions that do not exceed an hour.
- The Youth Gang Resource Center should leverage collaborative relationships with organizations within the gang services network to identify former gang members that can present at selected training sessions.
- Ongoing relationships between the Youth Gang Resource Center and the Youth Gang Hotline should be further developed.