



**Office of the Mayor  
City of Los Angeles**

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### **MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA, CHIEF BRATTON ANNOUNCE CITY'S 2009 GANG REDUCTION STRATEGY**

*Mayor and Chief set a 15% gang crime reduction goal for 2009 and detail new community-based prevention efforts to keep kids out of gangs*

**LOS ANGELES** – Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa joined Chief William Bratton, Public Safety Committee Chair Jack Weiss and Gang Reduction and Youth Development Director Rev. Jeff Carr today to announce the City's 2009 gang crime reduction strategy.

“We have radically changed the way this city works to prevent and suppress gang crime,” said Mayor Villaraigosa. “If we can keep gang crime down this year – in a bad economy that we expect will get worse before it gets better – this new approach can be the blueprint big cities across the country will adopt as the new model for combating gang crime”

Building upon the gang crime reduction effort initiated in 2007, the new strategy will target gang intervention and prevention efforts where they are needed most – in the areas of highest gang crime. Led by the Mayor's office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, the 2009 strategy will increase community-based gang prevention and intervention services, targeted parolee employment training and the development of an intervention-training academy.

This effort continues the comprehensive reforms in the City's gang reduction efforts which began in January 2007 with the citywide LAPD suppression effort that dismantled the 204<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, launched the South Bureau Criminal Gang

Homicide Group, identified the City's "Top Targeted Street Gangs" and directed resources to apprehend Los Angeles' Most Wanted Gang Members.

In an effort to reverse a rise in gang crime in 2006, Mayor Villaraigosa, Chief Bratton and City Controller Laura Chick sought a major reorganization that guaranteed clear lines of oversight, accountability and performance measures. As a result, the Mayor established new Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) office to ensure greater coordination and cooperation in the City's gang reduction efforts.

After appointing the Reverend Jeff Carr to lead the new efforts, GRYD helped to record the City's safest summer in more than 30 years by keeping the lights on at eight parks in the most gang ridden neighborhoods with its Summer Night Lights program. GRYD successfully conducted three rounds of funding for new gang prevention programs using a rigorous process that ensured accountability and transparency.

The 2009 gang reduction strategy will continue to implement its three-pronged approach—suppression, prevention and intervention—including an ongoing commitment to grow the City's police force and increased investments in youth development.

*Below are brief descriptions of the strategy's components:*

### **Community-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Services**

As part of GRYD's innovative strategy to support gang prevention and intervention services in the most gang-plagued communities across the City, GRYD has implemented a fair and competitive bid process to identify 12 non-profit organizations to provide gang prevention services in each of the GRYD zones. They are also in the process of identifying 12 non-profit organizations to provide gang intervention services and up to 8 organizations (4 per prevention; 4 per intervention) to provide services in areas outside of the 12 GRYD zones.

### **Youth Services Eligibility Tool (YSET) Implementation**

In partnership with gang researchers at the University of Southern California (Dr. Karen Hennigen, Dr. David Sloane, and Dr. Malcolm Klein) and the University of California, Irvine (Dr. Cheryll Maxson, Dr. S. Golwala and Dr. Kirstin Morgan), GRYD has developed an assessment tool to assist community agencies in the selection of clients at highest risk of gang activity and most appropriate for street gang prevention programming. This tool is the first of its kind in the country and will help reduce "false positives" i.e., agencies enrolling youth into programming that have a low likelihood of ever joining a gang. This program also requires that all 12 of our gang prevention providers implement this tool in the selection of clients to receive gang prevention services.

## **Summer Night Lights 2009**

This past summer, the GRYD Office launched the Summer Night Lights program at seven parks and one public housing development located in seven of the twelve GRYD zones. As a result of the successful partnerships with city and community organizations and the LAPD, the City experienced one of its safest summers in over 30 years.

Given SNL's success at contributing to the decrease in gang violence within the original seven GRYD Zones, GRYD plans to expand the effort in the summer of 2009 to more parks and housing developments citywide.

## **Gun Buyback Campaign**

The GRYD office is working in partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney and various community based organizations to launch a Gun Buyback Campaign. The objective of the Gun Buy Back initiative is to positively influence the reduction of gun accidents and gun violence in the home. In addition, the campaign will serve as a deterrent for the theft of guns later used to commit crimes, and ultimately reducing the risk of death or injury caused by guns.

Gun Buyback events allow individuals to surrender their firearms to law enforcement at pre-designated sites with no questions asked. At that time, in exchange for the firearm the individual would be provided with a gift card to a grocery store.

## **MOU with CDD for Targeted Employment Training**

In partnership with the Community Development Department (CDD), the Mayor's office executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlined a collaboration to deliver Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services to clients who are gang affiliated, ex-gang affiliated, or ex-offenders. The collaboration includes the referral of potential clients by GRYD office gang intervention contractors to local WorkSource and OneSource centers for enrollment in employment related services and ongoing case conferencing to ensure that clients receive the support necessary to move into the work force. Gang Intervention agencies will work directly with job developers at the centers to refer clients to services such as job training, job placement, case management and assistance with resume writing. A total of 500 slots or 10 percent of all WIA case managed clients have been set aside to serve the gang-involved and ex-offender population citywide.

## **Intervention Training Academy**

In an effort to nurture the development of a singular training academy for gang intervention specialists that would incorporate theory, practice, professional standards, and relevant curriculum, the GRYD office collaborated with the Advancement Project on the Community Violence Intervention Academy Fall 2008 Pilot Session. The project was funded by the Weingart Foundation and provided a nine week, 15 hours per week curriculum, designed by intervention specialists, academics, policy analysts, mental health professionals, and law enforcement personnel.

The Community Violence Intervention Academy was attended by 30 highly experienced gang intervention specialists from various agencies throughout Los Angeles. The training program will be fully functional later this year

## **Reentry Initiative**

GRYD is working closely with the County's Department of Probation to assist youth recently released from juvenile halls and camps into our local communities. GRYD's partnership with Probation is working on developing a three pronged approach to serving the juvenile probationer: pre-release (Diagnose), release (Treatment) and post- release (Continuum of Care/ sustainability and maintenance). This unique opportunity allows GRYD to connect Probation with contracted gang intervention agencies in providing comprehensive wrap-around services pre and post release.

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