

## **Evaluation of the Citywide Gang Reduction Strategy**

The primary responsibility for assuring that ongoing evaluation is conducted with integrity of the data systems, data collection analysis, and interpretation shall reside within the *“Research and Evaluation Institute.”* A unit of academic and community based evaluation specialists, which can be contained within the new division of violence prevention or be contracted out to a university or academic institution. The Institute staff shall be responsible for training all segments of the violence prevention effort in data collection strategies, data entry and how to appropriately and consistently collect, record and code data.

Evaluation will consist of three major components.

### ***Component 1: Monitoring and data collection***

Recommendations for improved standardized data collection must be implemented. In addition, LAPD data must be monitored on a regular basis as least annually, to assure that the data are reliable and valid. Discrepancies in data collections within the separate divisions will be corrected before the data can be analyzed and interpreted, and as data are monitored, changes can be made to assure that the data are being collected and entered as intended. All data sets will be subject to the same scrutiny, including community-based programs, law enforcement, school, health care providers, etc. Furthermore, we recommend that the City agencies agree on a minimal set of variables to be collected in a standardized way by all city departments so that data sets can “talk” to each other and will thus be useful for telling the story of the city’s efforts to reduce gang and youth violence and build healthy communities.

### ***Component 2: Template for individual program evaluation***

This component is realistically expected to provide quality control analysis of the individual programs and strategies. Each program will develop measurable goals and objectives, consistent with the expected feasible outcomes of the program. Templates will be developed by the Institute for each program type. Training and technical assistance will be provided to all programs and collaboratives to assure that the program goals and objectives are reasonable considering the program activities. Intake forms will be standardized to the extent that they will all collect similar demographic data, attendance criteria, initial assessment and ongoing program monitoring components. It is most likely that the evaluations will be process oriented since prevention programs are expected to require lengthy implementation periods to actually effect change in outcome measures. Moreover, the overall community evaluation, component 3, is expected to be sensitive to changes in outcomes and levels of violence and crime in each of the targeted areas. This component will provide monitoring and accountability for programs, training, and policy development.

### ***Component 3: Neighborhood, community cluster outcome evaluation***

This evaluation component will consist of the overall outcome evaluation of the clusters, communities, neighborhoods, and city effect of the proposed City Strategy. Data will be collected at the census tract level and will use spatial evaluation similar to the baseline geographic profiles that have been done as part of this report in Phase I. Similar data and variables as used in Phase I which will be considered baseline, will be collected annually and will be reviewed annually. When the data have been collected for each of the three years following implementation, evaluation data analysis will be conducted using the regression and mapping models developed at the baseline.

The study design is intervention versus control in which the target areas will be assessed by comparing the baseline models with the three year data collected on all of the same variables as the baseline, and the addition of some variables not available at the baseline such as re-entry data at the census tract level from the County Department of Probation, and land use data also from the County Office of Urban Research. Crime data and the variables provided by LAPD at baseline will continue to be collected with the caveat that any changes in definitions or variables will be reported to the evaluation institute immediately. We would also suggest that Emergency Department Data on non-fatal injuries caused by violence would also be included in the model.

Each of the targeted intervention sites will be compared to their baseline data and to the entire City at the three-year milestone to determine changes in levels of violent crime and violent gang crime. Data analysis will use regression, and multiple regression analysis for comparison, with attention paid to intra class correlations. Specifically, for a given outcome, the dependent variable will be the outcome values over the three years of intervention. The independent variables will be the baseline data at the start of the study as well as contextual data describing the various locations included in the study. The unit of analysis will be the census tract. The mixed regression models will incorporate the intra-class correlations among the census tracts as well as those over time.<sup>1</sup>

A primary variable to be included in the models is an indicator that has value (1) if the area is targeted for intervention and has value (0) if not. We test the null hypothesis that the coefficient of this variable is zero, and if it is rejected, we conclude that the intervention has an effect. We would then proceed to estimate the magnitude of the effect.

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<sup>1</sup> G. Verbeke and G. Molenberghs, *Linear Mixed Models for Longitudinal Data*, New York: Springer, 2000, and G Molenbeghs and G. Verbeke, *Models for Discrete Longitudinal Data*, New York: Springer, 2005). The SAS PROC MIXED and PROC GENMOD software and the STATA *xtmixed* and *xtlogit* commands will be used for the analysis.