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# Positive Youth Development

## MISSION STATEMENT

Montgomery County is committed to creating a supportive, violence-free community for children, youth and families where young people are valued, treated with dignity and given opportunities to realize their full potential. The County and its partners are responding to the urgent need to reach out to support youth who are faced with challenges including gang involvement, poverty, and pressure to engage in risky behaviors. The methods used to respond to these challenges include positive youth development and gang intervention and suppression. Multiple agencies throughout the county are working actively together to engage youth and families positively and to prevent and address youth violence and gang activity.

## LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULTS AREAS

- ❖ *Children Prepared to Live and Learn*
- ❖ *Healthy and Sustainable Communities*
- ❖ *Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods*

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Gabriel Albornoz of the Department of Recreation at 240.777.6800 or Pofen Salem of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2773 for more information regarding this Initiative's operating budget.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In December 2006, County Executive Isiah Leggett articulated a new vision for focusing on the issues of gang activity and youth violence based on the fact that gang crime and activity are more pronounced in specific locations in the County. This new vision also called for new efforts to encompass a broader cross-discipline approach for positive youth development rather than strictly gang prevention.

The Positive Youth Development/Gang Intervention and Suppression Initiative is a comprehensive response to the problems of gangs and youth violence in the County, and reflects the commitment by the County to an approach that includes prevention, intervention and suppression components. The Initiative's priorities serve to enhance existing approaches and services, and ensure the County's ability to respond to emerging trends and challenges.

The leadership of these efforts is provided by the director of Health and Human Services, the director of Recreation, the Chief of Police, along with key members of the County Executive's staff, Public Libraries, Correction and Rehabilitation, MCPS, the State's Attorney's Office, and community leaders. Several members of the current leadership team participated in the 2004 Montgomery County Gang Prevention Task Force, thus ensuring that the new initiative builds upon effective previous efforts. Work continues in the areas of suppression and enforcement, outreach and education, violence prevention and deterrence.

The Positive Youth Development Initiative also includes multiple efforts to strengthen out of school time programming throughout the county. The Montgomery County Collaboration Council, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Recreation, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Montgomery College, MCPS, and many other key partners are working together to address quality, to assess needs, to unify funding approaches and to develop shared program approaches and outcomes. These efforts will result in the increase of programs and support for the youth of the county.

Services benefiting County youth are incorporated in the general department program offerings as well as targeted services. These projects respond to multiple critical needs facing the County at this time and the desired outcomes of reducing gang violence and crime and promoting youth success and development. Below are some of the major County Government programs currently supporting County youth:

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### **Department of Health and Human Services**

- Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center and Upcounty Youth Opportunity Center provide a wide array of support services for high-risk youth and youth who seek to exit gang life.
- Gang Prevention Initiative provides after school programming to serve at risk Latino youth.
- Maryland Multicultural Youth Center provides case management, GED preparation, job readiness development, and after school programs to high risk youth.
- High School Wellness Center provides school-based positive youth development programs for after school activities, job readiness, academic support, mental health services, parent support groups, leadership development, truancy reduction, and other health related services.
- Street Outreach Network provides crisis intervention services, conflict management services, recreational and leisure activities, middle school and high school based youth groups for high risk youth, job readiness and workforce development, and community based projects that engage youth in positive life-affirming activities.
- Asian American LEAD Program provides after school enrichment programs and mentoring to students at four middle schools and two high schools.

### **Department of Recreation**

- Sports Academies provide direct leadership for four high schools, including Paint Branch, Wheaton, Montgomery Blair, and Springbrook that serve over 2000 students throughout the school year. Programming ranges from sports, job readiness, and community services to leadership development.
- Rec Extra Programs provide after school programming from 3:15pm to 4:30pm at 13 Middle schools. These programs offer sports, Yoga, Hip Hop dance, certified baby sitting training, cooking, and other activities.
- Excel Beyond the Bell Program, a partnership between Recreation, the Montgomery County Collaboration Council and Montgomery County Public Schools, offered at 3 locations from 3:00pm to 5:15pm to provide very concentrated and expanded programming, including STEM (science technology, engineering and math), sports, variety of dance and arts programming, a hot supper and a delayed after school transportation.
- Teen Events provide an After Hours teen program at several Community Centers, the Teen Café at East County Community Center, and special events at several of the Sports Academies which includes such events as Futsol, Spring Basketball tournament, and Fall Football – Turkey Bowl tournament.
- Teen Leadership offers a Summer Leadership Challenge program and Junior Counselor Leadership Training and continues to provide limited support and leadership to the Youth Advisory Committee.
- Summer Teen Programs offer Teen Service Learning Opportunities for teens during the summer and has partnered with Identity, the Center for Adoption Support and Education and the Community Foundation, to provide a wide variety of programming including teen summer programs and year round programming for children in adoptive or foster care.

### **Department of Police**

- Centralized Gang Task Force specifically dedicated to responding and combating criminal gang activity in Montgomery County, including the gathering of intelligence, surveillance, and investigations; street enforcement; and educating the public and other governmental agencies on gang activity.
- Provide one School Resource Officer (SRO) for each of the six police districts to assist school staff in maintaining safety of the schools and serving as liaison between the Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County Public Schools officials for school and police related concerns and incidents. The SRO serves to deter and prevent acts of school violence and gang activity while also fostering positive relationships between the County's youth and the police.
- Provide one Community Services Officer for each of the six police districts to address long-term problem solving issues, including Neighborhood Watch, Community Outreach, CRIMEREPORTS.com, day to day citizen questions, station web sites, National Night Out events, community presentation, and neighborhood/homeowner association meetings. These Officers provide community outreach and community relations.

### **Department of Correction and Rehabilitation**

- Detention Services provides a General Educational Development (GED) and High School Diploma Program that comes with annual graduation with family attendance, manages the Gang Management Program which primarily involves youthful offenders, offers the Model Learning Center Education Program for intensive Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED, English as a Second Language (ESL) and Computer Skill Literacy, and provides a Dedicated Youthful Offender Housing Unit focusing on life skills, positive youth development and education.
- Pre-Release and Re-Entry Services (PRRS) partners with Future Link, which administers the NET program, to provide youth coaches, self-advocacy education and other academic, vocational and career supports to assist vulnerable yet motivated young adults successfully transition into adulthood.

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- Refer young Latino residents under the supervision of the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation to the Latin American Youth Center for GED programming and other services.

#### **Office of the State's Attorney**

- The State's Attorney's Office has four Assistant State's Attorney's who prosecute gang related crimes. These attorneys work with one full time and two part time investigators who screen all cases that come into the State's Attorney's Office to ensure that gang related cases are handled by the Gang Unit. The investigators also maintain a database to track trends and conduct analyses of gang related cases. The Gang Unit works closely with the Police Department and neighboring jurisdictions to reduce gang related activity.

#### **Department of Public Libraries**

- Engage youth and leverage their talents, skills, and energies in several ways, including a collaboratively developed and maintained Teen Facebook page on the Internet; an active Teen Advisory Group that provides feedback and advice on library services to the library director, administrators, and library staff; volunteer opportunities for youth who are completing School-required public service; job opportunities for teens as Library Pages; and co-programming with teens, and programs held for youth and teens throughout the year, including Summer Reading programs for children and Teens.
- Provide a point person on children's services and a point person on young adult services at each library branch to coordinate efforts throughout the library system, which has a Teen Services Steering Committee and a library representative participates in the County's Positive Youth Development initiative.
- Offer Teen areas in many branches to allow teens gatherings to collaborate, use computers, or enjoy library materials specially selected for their interests.
- Prepare children for School or Home Schooling and continue to support curriculum, achievement, and student readiness to learn via early literacy programming and the materials collection.

#### **Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

- Initiate academic enrichment activities and tutoring to low-income Asian American youth in the Wheaton/Silver Spring areas.
- Continue college preparation services to Wheaton High School students at risk of not attending or succeeding in college.
- Support a comprehensive after-school program that utilizes instruction in playwriting and theater production to improve reading, writing, and public speaking proficiencies in middle school students in Germantown.
- Continue an after-school program of civic engagement and a professional internship program in partnership with Wheaton High School.
- Continue a volunteer training and work program and a parent training program to educate parents with the skills and knowledge to support their children's volunteer work and internship program.

#### **Department of Environmental Protection – Solid Waste Services**

- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program pays for young offenders doing alternative community service to mix and harden paint in the HHW area.

#### **Board of Elections**

- Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to hold Voter Registration Drive conducted in April of each year. The activity encompasses Student Leadership Week, and concludes on the Student Member of the Board of Education Election Day.

The FY12 Approved Budget includes approximately \$7.46 million in tax-supported resources identified for the Positive Youth Development Initiative. The following efforts provide increased funding of \$1.02 million to continue the implementation of the Positive Youth Development Initiative into FY13.

## **FY13 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS**

#### **Department of Health and Human Services**

- Replace Grant Funding for the UpCounty Youth Opportunity Center (\$260,000).
- Partially replace Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) (\$23,880).
- Enhance Drug Prevention and Intervention Services to gang involved youth at the Upcounty Youth Opportunity Center and Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center (\$50,000).

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- Enhance the Street Outreach Network staff to provide targeted street outreach in East County (\$91,210).

#### **Department of Recreation**

- Enhance the after school program Excel Beyond the Bell at Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools in Clarksburg and Germantown (\$213,680).
- Add STEP (Student/Teen Employment Program) in summer to provide training in general landscaping, maintenance skills and support for community based events as well as job readiness training in financial literacy, job etiquette, teamwork, and communication leadership for at-risk youth in school ages 16 to 19 years (\$315,296).
- Enhance countywide Weekend/Evening Teen Programs for middle and high school students (\$128,000).
- Provide Scotland Alternate Program during closure for renovations (\$61,570).

#### **Non-Departmental Account Community Grants**

- Non-profit grants totaling \$1,196,770 will incorporate programs and services to support County youth.

#### **Department of Technology Services**

- Add Youth Media Program to provide support for media internships at Montgomery County Public Schools Instructional Television, a youth-produced monthly television program and on-line content, and a youth worker mobile media production work program that offers employment for youths who have completed media training and a means to expand media coverage of community events (\$50,000).