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 together actively to engage youth and families positively and to prevent and address youth violence and gang activity.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULT AREAS

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

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Kate Garvey of the Department of Health and Human Services at 240.777.1101 or Ed Piesen of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2764 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 has also called for new efforts to encompass a broader approach for positive youth development rather than strictly gang prevention.

The Positive Youth Development 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 to ensure the County's ability to be responsive to emerging trends and challenges.

Leadership for these efforts is provided by the Directors of Health and Human Services and Recreation and the Chief of Police, along with key members of the County Executive's staff, Libraries, Correction and Rehabilitation, Montgomery County Public Schools, the Office of the State's Attorney, and community leaders. Several members of the current leadership team participated in the 2004 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 newest component of the initiative, the Community Based Collaboratives, identified three communities based on Police Department data on calls for service and gang activity. The selected areas are Long Branch (Silver Spring), the Bel Pre Road corridor (Aspen Hill), and Gunners Branch (Germantown).

Regional Services Center Directors have convened the Community Based Collaboratives from these three communities to tailor local initiatives to the needs and desires of the neighborhoods. They are bringing together parents, youth, civic, faith-based, and business representatives, as well as and public and private providers from the community, to create, design, and provide input on programs for positive youth development.

Each community has focused on three over-arching goals:

- Increase youth access to out-of-school time and youth employment activities with caring, competent adults.
- Increase the quality of activities so that youth will participate and positive impacts on youth will occur.
- Create effective local collaborations that will build on current resources and address policy issues that limit services to youth.

These groups will continue to work to identify concrete projects that will support the youth of their respective communities.

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

The FY08 Approved Budget for the Positive Youth Development Initiative included an additional tax supported funding of $2,383,190 and non tax supported funding of $1,315,990, for total additional funding of $3,699,180. The total FY08 budget for the Positive Youth Initiative is $6,292,360.

FY09 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

The following efforts totaling $664,530 will be undertaken to continue the implementation of the Positive Youth Development Initiative. These projects respond to multiple critical needs facing the County at this time and the desired outcomes of reducing gang violence and crime and of promoting youth success and development.

Department of Health and Human Services ($397,730)

- Replacement of grant to continue Youth Opportunity Center

Department of Recreation ($266,800)

- Annualization of positions approved in FY08 ($172,470) for the Sports Academy
- Annualization of the UpCounty Sports Academy ($49,560)
- Provide additional Summer Fun Centers in Olney and Germantown ($30,000)
- Long Branch Pilot Recreation Program ($14,770)