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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.

## FY14 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS

The FY13 Approved Budget includes approximately \$10.87 million in tax-supported resources identified for the Positive Youth Development Initiative. The following efforts provide increased funding of \$3.19 million to continue the implementation of the Positive Youth Development Initiative into FY14, for a total amount of \$14.06 million.

### Department of Health and Human Services

- Add two High School Wellness Centers at Gaithersburg and Watkins Mill High Schools (\$1,594,640).

### Department of Recreation

- Add part-time and seasonal staff to operate the Plum Gar Recreation Center as a full service Community Recreation Center operating at 58 hours per week and restore the Club Rec after school program (\$62,520).
- Add part-time and seasonal staff to operate a Club Rec after school program at the Ken Gar Center (\$10,364).
- Enhance the Excel Beyond the Bell after school program to one additional middle school (\$136,347).
- Expand the Extended Learning Opportunity program to three middle schools for summer programming to provide year round learning and support services for students in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and the FARMS (Free and Reduced-Price Meals) programs (\$94,140).
- Add a Kennedy Cluster and Out-of-School Coordinator to expand the Kennedy Cluster project and help the phasing in of Excel Beyond the Bell (\$80,000).
- Funding to support the Excel Beyond the Bell initiative to continue the work of coordination of out-of-school time providers and key stakeholders, monitoring outcomes, establishing and carrying out training of front line youth workers, and support in identifying additional financial resources (\$95,000).

### Department of Police

- Add Six School Resource Officers and replace expired grant funds for the Gang Unit as part of the three-year Police Staffing Initiative from FY13 to FY15 (\$868,168).

### Department of Public Libraries

- Establish a Digital Media Lab at Long Branch Library, supporting the work of teen students who need access to modern software tools for creating content for self-expression, school assignments, collaborations, and other purposes (\$30,000).

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- Enhance the Montgomery County Public Libraries e-book collection to include an increase in e-books and other downloadable content relevant to youth of all ages (\$200,000).

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

- Replace funding from the Gang Grant, which expires in FY13, to support one full time and two part time Special Investigators, who will identify gang-involved cases and activities (\$150,433).

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

- Enhance Youth Voices program to expand teen-produced programming, digital media internships and training, and create a teen-led transmedia governance committee to create a hip and safe youth-centric on-line community space (\$25,000).

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

- Increase non-profit grants to our community partners by more than \$1.64 million for 42 proposals providing services such as afterschool programming, mentoring, leadership development, college prep, education on domestic violence, and internship programs to engage youth that are high risk, low income, new immigrants, and/or disabled.

## **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 children and youth exposed to trauma, 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 utilizing culturally competent and evidence based approaches.

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, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the State's Attorney's Office, and community leaders. Work continues in the areas of suppression and enforcement, outreach and education, violence prevention, and deterrence.

The Positive Youth Development Initiative (PYDI) 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. In addition, many of the Health and Human Services PYDI Programs provide opportunities for children and youth to heal from trauma and utilize trauma informed, evidence based curriculums accordingly.

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 addressing trauma, reducing gang violence and crime, and promoting youth success and development. Below are some of the major County Government programs currently supporting County youth:

#### **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, juvenile delinquency, and criminal activity, along with the prevention of violence.
- Identity After School Program 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 gang and youth violence crisis intervention services, conflict management services, recreational and leisure activities, elementary, middle school, and high school based youth groups for high risk youth during and after school, job readiness and workforce development, and community based projects that engage youth and young adults in positive life-affirming activities, as well as provides support services to youth and young adults returning to the community after incarceration or detention. The program also provides transformational healing processes for children and youth impacted by trauma and/or violence.
- Asian American Leadership, Empowerment and Development for Youth and Family Program provides after school enrichment programs and mentoring to students at four middle schools and two high schools.
- Conservation Corps provide job, education, and life skills training for out-of-school and unemployed County youth ages 17 to 24.

### **Department of Recreation**

- Sports Academies provide direct leadership for four high schools, including Einstein, Wheaton, Montgomery Blair, and Springbrook, that serve over 2,000 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 3:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. 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 among Recreation, the Montgomery County Collaboration Council, and MCPS, offered at five locations from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., provides very concentrated and expanded programming, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), sports, a variety of dance and arts programming, a hot supper, and a delayed after school transportation.
- Teen Events provide an after hour teen program at a number of community recreation centers that are spread out among five regions. Events include Teen Cafés, as well as special events such as Futsol tournaments, the Spring Basketball tournament, a summer outdoor basketball league, and the 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.
- Student/Teen Employment Program (STEP) provides training in summer 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.

### **Department of Police**

- Centralized Gang Task Force is 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 MCPS 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 presentations, 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, GED, English as a Second Language, 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 partners with Future Link 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.
- 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.

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**Office of the State's Attorney**

- The State's Attorney's Office has four Assistant State's Attorneys 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 and an active Teen Advisory Group that provides feedback and advice on library services to the Library Director, administrators, and library staff. The department also offers volunteer opportunities for youth who are completing school-required public service, as well as job opportunities for teens as Library Pages. There is programming presented by the department, teens, or collaborations of both, including a Summer Reading program, homework help, writing and author program, and eReader training.
- Provide a young adult services librarian at each library branch to coordinate programming and collection efforts throughout the library system. A Teen Services Steering Committee advises the Administration on teen issues, teen collections, teen training for staff, and teen programming.
- Offer teen spaces in many branches where they can gather, collaborate, use computers, or enjoy library materials specially selected for their interests.
- Offer a library materials collection that supports school or home schooling needs; personal interests; career/college preparation; and STEM.

**Department of Technology Services (Cable Communication Plan)**

- Youth Media Program supports media internships and training programs for teens, as well as Youth Voices – a program in which Montgomery County teenagers produce digital media content for television and the Internet, leverage [www.mymcmedia.org/youth](http://www.mymcmedia.org/youth) to create a youth-centric on-line community platform for young people to share ideas and offer civic input, and train professionals working with youth to use digital media to advance their organizational missions.

**Department of Housing and Community Affairs**

- Conduct a 7-week learning experience in STEM for African-American 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Support pre-school Play and Learn programs at five affordable housing complexes.
- Support staffing for youth and family services at Nob Hill Community Center in Silver Spring.

**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 the 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.
- Future Vote increases current and future voter knowledge, educates, and strengthens ties related to civic participation for Montgomery County's youth and families by actively providing an opportunity for civic duty, community involvement, and emphasis on the importance of preserving participatory democracy.