

**Statement of
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Before the

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Los Angeles: The Safest Big City in America Sustained Gang Violence Reduction in Los Angeles

In the last decade, there have been significant crime reductions throughout the country. However, in Los Angeles crime has continued to drop and today, Los Angeles is experiencing the lowest crime rates it has seen since 1959. While crime rates are important, they are not the only factor that measures the condition of a city. The relationship between the government and its community is a pivotal indicator of a community's wellbeing. The most visible representatives of the government are police officers. The manner in which a community is policed has a direct impact on that pivotal relationship between a city's ability to reduce crime and the means to sustain it.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, violence and homicides in the City of Los Angeles climbed sharply. The Police Department attempted to curb the violence with a single point approach with mass suppression efforts in areas of the city that were experiencing spikes in violence. Those suppression efforts included strategies like the "The War on Gangs" or "Operation Hammer," where large numbers of police officers were brought into an area to focus on general suppression. There was a zero tolerance for any behavior that even suggested criminal activity.

If solely based on homicide statistics, it is difficult to argue that this strategy was successful because the murder rate continued to climb and peaked in 1993. Furthermore, it is clear that the blanket suppression efforts in areas of the city eroded and inflamed the relationship between the police and the community. It is this friction which ultimately set the stage for the violent civil unrest in Los Angeles in 1992.

However, the city of Los Angeles began to see positive changes starting in 1997 and has expanded over a ten-year period. Instead of blanket suppression efforts, a number of gang reduction strategies were employed in the city. In 2007, The Advancement Project released its report, "A Call to Action: A Case for a Comprehensive Solution to LA's Gang Violence Epidemic." Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa then released the city's Gang Reduction Plan. This plan created the Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Office, which fueled and provided the means to bring this strategy to life. This was the start of true partnerships between law enforcement and gang interventionists.

The current success in Los Angeles can be attributed to a multifaceted approach to enhance communities, eradicate the fear of gangs, and decrease crime and violence. This is based on governmental and community partnerships that coordinate intervention, prevention, resources, community engagement, and strategic suppression efforts. All of these strategies are dependent upon building meaningful and trusting relationships with communities that historically have not had good relations with the police. It remains a critical priority of the Police Department to ensure officers continue to improve those relationships by not only policing constitutionally, but also treating its constituents with respect. Ultimately, the sustainability and advancement of these strategies will thrive only if a community trusts the police with these suppression efforts.

The following are highlights of the Los Angeles Strategies:

Urban Peace Institute and the Advancement Project Partnership

- 2007 Call to Action follow-through.
- The professional training of gang intervention workers.
- Partnering with law enforcement to create comprehensive violence reduction strategies.
- Developing strategies to build African American and Latino relationships.
- Conducting community assets and needs assessments in violent communities.

The Mayor's Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Program

The GRYD programs are done in conjunction with law enforcement and community based organizations. GRYD includes the following components:

1. Prevention

- Gun Buy Back Program
- Gang Prevention Services
- Community Action Teams
- Community Education Teams

2. Intervention Case Management

- Family Based case management
- Reentry referrals and services

3. Intervention Violence Interruption

Working in teams, intervention workers have three primary functions:

- Violence interruption at the neighborhood level is handled by trained intervention workers. Their personal experience with gang life gives them credibility in these targeted communities.
- Proactive peacemaking – establishing “ceasefire” agreements which quell rumors that fan the flames of gang violence, mediating conflicts between rival gangs before they can escalate.
- Outreach with incarcerated gang members immediately before and after their release to prevent them from returning to gang life during the first 24 hours after reentry, when they are most likely to fall back into activities of gang crime.

4. Gang Suppression

- Ongoing communications with law enforcement to explain enforcement actions.
- Coordinating with partners to communicate trends and patterns to prevent flare ups before they happen.
- Strategic and targeted suppression to take Shot Callers and violent offenders off the streets.
- Partnering with other agencies to accelerate and improve investigations.

Gang Related Crime Statistics for GRYD Zone Communities 2007 to 2011.

29.9% reduction in gang crime.

42.4% reduction in shots fired.

33% reduction in homicides in the GRYD Zones compared to a 15% reduction outside of GRYD Zones.

Assaults with a deadly weapon against police officers have dropped 48% inside the GRYD Zone compared to 9% outside.

The Mayor's Office and police have collected over 6,000 fire arms due to gun buy back.

Community Engagement

GRYD attempts to engage law enforcement and the community in all of their activities to build that relationship.

1. Summer Night Lights (SNL)

- A violence reduction strategy that focuses on high gang violence areas.
- Provides free programming for the entire community in city parks and recreation facilities from 3:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight four nights a week.
- Both Intervention and Law enforcement are present.

SNL Crime Reduction Statistics compare 2007 to 2011 for the combined SNL Park locations

- 35% reduction in gang related Part I crime.
- 35% reduction in gang related homicides.
- 43% reduction in Aggravated Assaults.
- 55% reduction in shots fired.

2. Watts Gang Task Force

Development of the Watts Gang Task Force

- The Watts community expressed their concerns to then Council Woman Janice Hahn regarding the three weeks of gang violence in their community.
- From the requests and concerns of the community, the Watts Gang Task Force (WGTF) was formed.

- WGTF meets on a weekly basis along with the Area Commanding Officers from various law enforcement agencies.
- The Housing Authority City of Los Angeles, Neighborhood Council, Council District Representatives, Los Angeles Unified School District, Clergy and the Mayor’s Gang Reduction and Youth Development intervention/prevention workers are all in attendance.
- Community members are now accountable and hold more responsibility within their individual housing developments.
- Meetings are responsible for a significant improvement in the relationship between the community and the police.

Community Safety Partnership Program

- Increased community relationships and support of law enforcement in housing developments that have historically had great disdain for the police.
- Reduce youth involvement in violence, delinquency and crime.
- Divert youth from juvenile institutions to community based resources.
- Engage families in programs to preserve, support and strengthen the family unit.
- Build a comprehensive and coordinated network of counseling services related to health, education, social and human services for youth and their families.
- Develop leadership skills for program participants.
- Provide the community with the skills and training to mobilize their resources to address the issues surrounding crime and to actively involve residents in the revitalization of their community.
- Officers have daily contact with the youth in the developments mentoring, tutoring and building relationships

Crime Statistics for the Housing Developments with Community Safety Partnership

Nickerson Gardens	YTD Property Crime -24%	Violent Crime – 34%	Gang Crime -63%
Imperial Courts	YTD Property Crime +60%	Violent Crime – 38%	Gang Crime -33%
Jordan Downs	YTD Property Crime -27%	Violent Crime – 70%	Gang Crime -81%

Los Angeles Police Department Prevention Programs

- Cadet Program
- Jr. Cadet Program
- Police Activities League
- Juvenile Impact Program
- LAPD Magnet School
- Operation Progress
- Jeopardy Program

Strategic Suppression and Partnerships

Local Task Forces with:

District Attorney

- Gang Enhancements

City Attorney

- Gang Injunctions

Federal Partnership

FBI

Operation Save Our Streets (SOS)

- Federal fiscal, logistical and investigative support of the Criminal Gang Homicide Division of the LAPD. Since the partnership began the homicide clearance has risen 20% to close to an unheard of 80%.
- Safe Street Gang Task Forces
Federal partners assisting on gang task forces to focus on the most violent offenders and Shot Callers.
- Homicide Library
First ever electronic homicide library that will enable detectives to find any case immediately. They will also be able to data mine and search cases for related content, suspects or clues.

ATF

Continued combined task forces focused on violent offenders.

DEA

Continued partnerships focused on major narcotics activity within street gangs.

Ultimately, effective strategic suppression will always be necessary to remove serious offenders from communities. However, suppression cannot stand alone. Not only has intervention played a significant role in reducing violence, it has built relationships in communities that have historically not had meaningful relationships with law enforcement. Not only are Intervention Workers gaining credibility with violent communities but they are gaining credibility with the cops that use to put handcuffs on them.