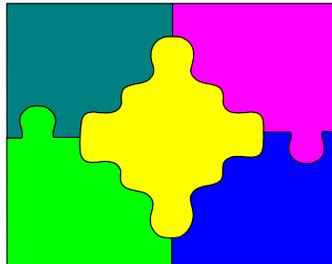


# CARROLL COUNTY GANG ASSESSMENT

## Final Report and Strategic Plan

November 2006



Prepared for:

**The Carroll County Local Management Board and  
The Carroll County Gang Task Force**

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## Introduction

The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP), in collaboration with the United States Attorneys Office – Maryland District (USAO-MD), is seeking to implement effective programs to address emerging gang issues in Maryland. In order to support the development of effective programs, GOCCP and USAO-MD recognized the importance of conducting sound assessments at the local level to determine the extent of gang activity and the capacity of jurisdictions to address gang issues. To that end, GOCCP awarded \$15,000 grants to Maryland jurisdictions to conduct a needs assessment and planning effort between July 30 and November 15, 2006. The Carroll County Local Management Board (LMB) applied for and received the GOCCP grant to conduct the gang assessment in Carroll County. The LMB then contracted with Shattuck & Associates, Inc., a research and evaluation firm located in the county, to plan and implement the assessment and to facilitate Gang Task Force meetings.

In conducting local assessments, GOCCP strongly recommended that jurisdictions utilize the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)'s Comprehensive Gang Model: A Guide to Assessing Your Community's Youth Gang Problem. The guide lists three compelling reasons for conducting the assessment: 1) each community is unique and needs customized programs and activities, 2) data brings an objective research-based perspective and helps move the conversation from 'what we think' to 'what we know,' and 3) the data creates a baseline against which progress can be measured and documented. A central feature of the assessment guide is the formation of two key groups – the Steering Committee (a.k.a. The Carroll County Gang Task Force) and the Assessment Team. Both groups were formed by the LMB and were critical to directing the assessment process. The OJJDP Guide states that a properly conducted assessment of the gang problem will:

- Identify the most serious and prevalent gang related problems.
- Determine potential factors contributing to gang problems.
- Identify current efforts to address gangs and gang-involved youth.
- Identify target groups for prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts.
- Shape community mobilization efforts and identify members who should be involved.
- Identify various organizational or systems issues that must be addressed in order to have a long-term effect on the problem.

Carroll County's Gang Task Force was successful in obtaining information about each of the areas above as well as identifying gaps in information about gang and gang activities. The task force now knows a good deal more about gang issues and implications than it did before. A key implication of the findings is that the county must continue to collect gang related information and to improve its systems to do so. As articulated in the OJJDP Guide, assessment is not a one shot deal; it is a critical ongoing component of any strategic plan aimed to deal with gang related problems.

## Overview of Assessment Process

Upon receipt of funding, the LMB finalized the development of the Carroll County Gang Task Force (Steering Committee) and met with Shattuck staff to begin the planning process. See Table 1 below for a list of agencies represented on the Task Force. In light of the project’s quick turn around time and the sheer number of task force members (~30), the planning team decided to hold two Gang Task Force Meetings during the assessment process – the first on September 8<sup>th</sup> and the second on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 1.**

<b>Agencies Represented on the Carroll County Gang Task Force</b>	
CC Detention Center	Core Service Agency
Circuit Court	Granite House
DJS	Head Start
Hampstead Police	Health Department
Sheriff’s Office	Junction, Inc.
Sykesville Police	NAACP
State’s Attorney’s Office	Youth Service Bureau
Taneytown Police	WEST, Inc.
Westminster Police	Westminster City Recreation
Carroll County Public Schools	Local Management Board
CC YMCA	

The purpose of the first meeting was to provide an overview of gangs and gang activity, to share existing gang data, to present results of the Gang Task Force Member Survey, and to discuss and select additional data collection activities. Please see the appendices for meeting materials. In addition, meeting participants were asked if they would be willing to participate on the Task Force Assessment Team - a subset of team members that would help finalize data collection strategies, review tools, and assist with data collection logistics. Six participants signed up for the Assessment Team and provided invaluable assistance with data collection efforts between the two meetings. See Table 2 below for data collection methods used during the assessment.

**Table 2.**

<b>Data Collection Activities and Timeline</b>	
Source and Method	Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing gang data – content analyses</li> </ul>	Assess extent of gang organization and gang activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Task Force Member Survey (N=29)</li> </ul>	Assess perceptions of and experiences with CC gangs, gang activity, and agency’s willingness/capacity to cope with gang issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Informant Phone Interviews (N=30)</li> </ul>	Assess perceptions of CC gang problems, origins; changes in gang and drug related activity; recommendations to address gang issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Gang Assessment Survey with Youth (N=243)</li> </ul>	Assess perceptions and familiarity CC gangs

The purpose of the second meeting was to present the results of the key informant interviews and preliminary results of the Community Survey. In addition, Sgt. Andy Eways, a guest speaker from the Maryland State Police, was brought in to debrief about assessment findings, to provide an overview of Carroll County gang activity, and to offer recommendations for strategic planning. Following the second meeting, LMB and Shattuck staff met to discuss lessons learned and data gaps. The most obvious gap was the lack of youth data, thus the planning team decided to collect additional community surveys from youth in order to better understand their perceptions of local gang issues. The following section describes the results of the assessment process using the ‘Results Accountability’ framework requested by the state. ([www.raguide.org](http://www.raguide.org))

## Results

Results Accountability is an approach to planning that starts with a desired end or result (e.g., reduction in violence) and works backward to the means. Indicators are benchmarks that help to quantify the achievement of the result (e.g., fewer gang related crimes). Strategies are actions that have a reasoned chance of improving the results (e.g., mentoring programs or after school programs). Strategies include the best thinking about what works and includes the contributions of many partners. It is important to note that no single action by any one agency improves results; it takes the contribution of many groups. Performance measures assess how well strategies are working (e.g., program satisfaction surveys). Table 3 below outlines the key questions posed in the Results Accountability Framework. The pages that follow provide answers to the questions.

**Table 3.**

<b>Results Accountability Framework</b>
1. Who is the target population for your gang reduction initiative?
2. What are the results the community is trying to achieve?
3. What does the data tell us?
4. What is the story behind the data and the direction it is heading? If the data are trending in the wrong direction, what are the causes and forces at work that are contributing to this direction?
5. Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?
6. What strategies will work to “turn the curve” and make things better?
7. Action Plan

### Question 1: Who is the target population? (Plus gang definitions)

The target population the Gang Task Force was investigating was youth ages 10-24. This age range was adapted from the OJJDP Guide, which cited youth gangs ranging in age from 12-24. The adaptation was made to encompass the transition from late elementary to the early middle school years, a time when youth could be exposed to, affiliate with, or become involved in gangs.

## Gang Definitions

The task force used the FBI's National Crime Investigation Center's definition of a gang and a gang member:

*A gang is an ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons and the group must have a common interest and/or activity characterized by the commission of or involvement in a pattern of criminal or delinquent behavior.*

*A gang member is an individual who meets any two of the following criteria: a person who has admitted membership at the time of arrest or incarceration OR has been identified by an individual of proven reliability as a gang member; has been identified by an individual of unknown reliability and that information has been corroborated in significant respects; had been observed to frequent a known gang area, associate with known gang members, and/or affect that group's style of dress, tattoos, hand signs, or symbols; has been arrested on more than one occasion with known gang members for offenses consistent with gang activity; has admitted membership in the identified gang at any time.*

A gang incident is difficult to define because much of what appears to be gang-related is actually gang members acting independently. The OJJDP Guide describes two predominate types of gang incidents: motive-based and member-based.

*A motive-based incident is 'generally thought to be one that furthers the ends of the gangs; a member-based incident is simply one that involves a gang member, regardless of what prompted the commission of the crime.'*

### Question 2: What are the results the community is trying to achieve?

The result the community is trying to achieve is "Children Safe in Their Families and Communities."

### Question 3. What does the data tell us?

#### ***Demographic Information – Carroll County***

Carroll County is one of the fastest-growing counties in Maryland. The population estimate for 2005 was 168,541 representing an 11.7% increase from 2000. By comparison, the state of Maryland experienced 5.7% growth in the same period. In the prior decade, 1990 to 2000, Carroll County experienced a 22.3% increase in growth; whereas Maryland's population increased by 10.8%. Compared to the state, Carroll County's minority population, foreign-born population, and non-English speaking (at home) population are relatively small. See Table 4. Economic indicators for Carroll County residents are favorable. In 2000, among residents 25 and

older, 85.3% had a high school degree and 24.8% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher; Maryland rates were 83.8% and 31.4%, respectively. In 2000, Carroll County had an 82% homeownership rate compared to 67.7% for the state and a median income (2003) of \$66,617 compared to \$54,302 for the state. (<http://quickfacts.census.gov>)

**Table 4.**

	<b>Carroll County (%)</b>	<b>Maryland (%)</b>
<b>2004</b>		
▪ White	95.1	64.5
▪ Minority Population	4.9	35.5
○ African American	2.9	29.1
○ American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.2	0.3
○ Asian	1.2	4.6
○ Hispanic/Latino	1.4	5.4
<b>2000</b>		
▪ Foreign Born	2.0	9.8
▪ Language other than English spoken at home	4.2	12.6

***Gang Member Information – Carroll County***

One of the primary objectives of the assessment was to begin to get a handle on the number of gangs and gang members in the county. Both LMB and Shattuck staff made several attempts to collect available data, but found that little exists. For example, in the Task Force Member Survey, 10 (35%) respondents indicated that their agency collected gang related data. When followed up, nine indicated that they had data to share. However, for many, it was the same data the Assessment Team had already obtained from that State’s Attorney Office. In the end, Shattuck received usable data from two entities, the State’s Attorney’s Office and the Carroll County Detention Center. Gang data was not available from local police departments in Carroll County, Department of Juvenile Services, Courts, schools, or community based organizations. While the data that was obtained indicated a gang problem among adults, the lack of information made it difficult to pinpoint specifics about gang composition and impossible to understand the extent of gang activity among youth. Nonetheless, the available information was useful in helping task force members begin to understand the problem.

The State’s Attorney Office began monitoring gang activity in the county nearly two years ago when their attention was drawn to a Crips gang that was involved in drug distribution and violent crime. The State’s Attorney compiled a large reference book for law enforcement that included photos, criminal records, and known associates. Information is regularly updated and shared at the monthly Criminal Investigation Division meeting attended by representatives of various Carroll County law enforcement agencies. The State’s Attorney Office summarized gang findings last spring in their Gang Activity Report in which they indicated having identified 13 gangs in Carroll County. The report notes that gangs from other counties (e.g., Frederick and Baltimore) are vying for the Carroll County drug market and that violence has occurred. In addition, the report states that Crips and Bloods are involved in drug distribution and violent crime and that Crip members have threatened or intimidated witnesses. Tables 5 and 6 show the

number of gang members identified by age and race. The majority of known gang members are adults 18 and over with the greatest number between the ages of 18 and 24. Known gang members are most likely to be African American followed by White and Hispanic. The disproportionate number of African American gang members is likely due to the predominance of the Crips and the Bloods in the county.

Table 5.

<b>Gang Membership by Gang and Age</b>				
<b>Gang</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>			
	<15	15-17	18-24	25+
Crips	2	3	31	9
Aryan Nation/Brotherhood	0	0	2	4
White Supremacist/KKK	0	0	1	0
Black Gorilla Family	0	0	0	1
Bloods – all sets	0	1	8	3
“G-3” North Carroll High School	0	0	1	2
Fatal – Winters Mill High School	0	1	4	0
MS-13	0	1	2	0
Vatos Locos	0	1	0	0
Totals	2	7	49	19

Table 6.

<b>Gang Membership by Gang and Race</b>			
<b>Gang</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>		
	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic
Crips	7	38	0
Aryan Nation/Brotherhood	6	0	0
White Supremacist/KKK	1	0	0
Black Gorilla Family	0	1	0
Bloods – 5 sets	2	10	0
“G-3” North Carroll High School	3	0	0
Fatal – Winters Mill High School	5	0	0
MS-13	0	0	3
Vatos Locos	0	0	1
Totals	24	49	4

In addition to the State’s Attorney Office data, the Carroll County Detention Center compiled a list of identified gang members incarcerated in the detention center over the past 2 years. See Table 7 below. All reported gang members were males. Among Crips and Bloods combined, all but 3 were African American. Of the three Latino gang members, all were Hispanic, and all white supremacists/Aryan brotherhood members were white. It is important to note that the both

the State’s Attorney and detention center data only reports on those individuals who have had encounters with the criminal justice systems and that the vast majority of cases were adults.

**Table 7.**

Gang Name/Type	# of CC residents /total #	Theft / Robbery	CDS	Assault	Sex Offense	Traffic Offenses	Probation Violation
▪ Crips	12/18	2	8	9	2	-	-
▪ Bloods	4/11	1	4	4	-	1	-
▪ Latino Gangs	3/3		1	1	-	1	1
▪ White Supremacist / Aryan Brotherhood	2/6	1	1	4	1	1	1
▪ Asian Gang	0/1	-	1	-	-	1	-

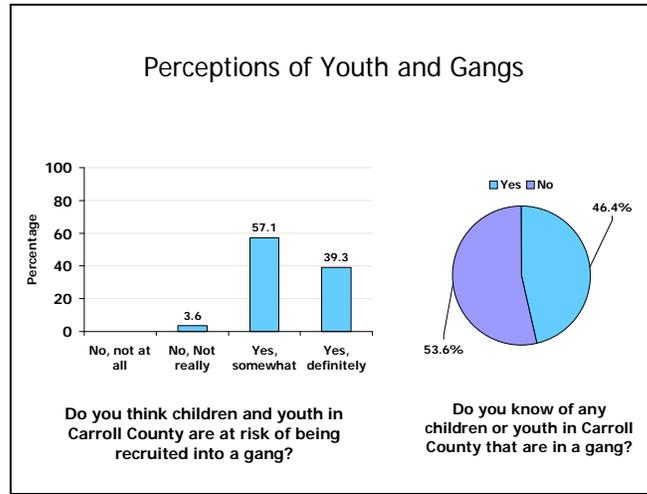
Note: Row totals may sum to a number higher than the total due to multiple offenses in a single case.

As evidenced by existing data, Carroll County has a gang problem. The known problem is primarily among adults. With respect to youth, no one seems to have a clear understanding of the extent of the gang problem. In order to better understand what providers and community members perceive, several data collection efforts were undertaken: Gang Task Force Member Survey (N=29), Key Informant Phone Interviews (N=30), and Community Surveys with youth (N=243). Please see the appendices for copies of the instruments and detailed summaries of results.

***The most serious and prevalent gang related problems***

The Crips and Bloods present the most serious and prevalent threat due to drug trafficking and violent crime. In addition to the gang data presented above, the extent of gang activity and organization was further explored in our data collection efforts. Across methods, it was clear that the vast majority of respondents perceive that there is a gang problem and that the gang problem is growing. For example, when Task Force Member Survey respondents were asked if gang activity had changed in the past year, 46% said it increased, 0% said it decreased, 11% said it remained the same, and 43% said they did not know. When asked if they thought there were gangs in Carroll County, 100% of respondents said yes. However, when asked if they were aware of gangs or gang activity, the number dropped to 83%. With respect to the question of whether or not gangs were a problem in the county, nearly a quarter said ‘definitely’ and close to 60% said ‘somewhat,’ the remaining 15% said ‘not really’ or ‘not at all.’ Furthermore, respondents perceive that Carroll County youth are at risk of being recruited into gangs and nearly half know of children or youth in gangs. See Table 8.

**Table 8.**



In response to an open-ended question about gang activity, survey respondents indicated why they believed gangs were a problem in the county. Their sources of information vary between first hand knowledge, newspaper accounts, and hearsay.

- *Drug related crimes, robberies, assaults, thefts and malicious destruction of property are all linked to the gang problem*
- *Reports from schools, different incidents that have occurred in the community (e.g., assaults, thefts) are reportedly linked to gangs, more kids wearing identifying colors and reporting association with gangs*
- *The kind of crimes that are being seen in juvenile and adult court seem to reveal that gang activity is more prevalent and increasing crime in the county*
- *I heard of gangs recruiting young African Americans on Charles Street in Westminster and also heard of Spanish gangs painting their gang signs in alleys in Westminster*

Table 9 provides a ranking of the types of problems task force members perceive in the community as a result of gang activity. Their greatest concerns center around an increase in

**Table 9.**

**Perception of Problems Presented By Gangs**

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Increase in drug crimes	60.7	1
Increase in violent crime	57.1	2
Increase in weapon crimes	35.7	3
Increase fear for safety	28.6	4
Public nuisance	28.6	4
Increase in vandalism/graffiti	21.4	5
Fighting	17.9	6
Increase in property crime	17.9	6
Family disruption	7.1	7
School disruption	7.1	7
Other	3.6	8
Gangs are not a problem here	0	9

crime: drug crimes, violent crimes, and weapons crimes. Concern about crime is followed by increased fear for safety and public nuisance.

The vast majority of interview respondents also reported that gangs are a problem in the county (26/30) though they varied widely on what ‘problem’ meant. Some said the problem is here, others stated the problem is emerging, and still others expressed concern about staying ahead of the problem. The comments below come directly from the key informant calls (LE = Law Enforcement; CCPS=Carroll County Public Schools; CBO=Community Based Organization):

The problem is here...

- *CC has gangs and they are a problem (LE)*
- *If in the kitchen and see one cockroach, you have a problem – problem vs. presence – any gang member is a problem (LE)*
- *Seen increase in violent gang-related crime in last 2 years (LE)*
- *Our local thugs became members of the Crips (LE)*
- *Increase in violence; were always bullies before, but level of violence went up – intimidation, robberies (LE)*

The problem is emerging...

- *Strong evidence that we are in beginning stages – we have baby gangs, beginning gangs. In the area that my school serves, we see gang mimicking, wannabes. Problem is coming down the pike (CCPS)*
- *Slow infiltration, testing to see what they get away with (LE)*
- *Gone up at a slow pace, minor, slow-moving trend (CCPS)*
- *Due to increase in drugs / drug activity; people coming from inner city to sell drugs (CBO)*

We need to stay ahead of the problem...

- *If you have an emerging immigrant population, you will have a gang problem. Hispanic population is growing in leaps and bounds in our community, there is an emerging anti-immigrant sentiment...some residents feel a need to get them out of here (LE)*
- *There is growing presence of gangs in CC but it hasn’t hit a point like other areas, Montgomery and PG Counties are just doing damage control; they started 20 years too late (LE)*

When asked what they specifically know about gangs or gang activity, key informants had highly varied responses. Law enforcement was aware of specific gang related matters (e.g., presence and arrests of Crip members); school personnel were aware of specific, yet minor, incidents that they perceived to be gang related (e.g. wannabe groups); and CBO personnel, while several had worked directly with youth gang members, had only vague notions of gang activity because in their provision of services they did not directly address the gang issues.

#### Law Enforcement...

- *Gang members come to CC to recruit, expand drug market*
- *Crips recruit local 'street thugs' (ages 15-23), they were already doing things (e.g., involved in low level drug trade); now have 'better supply & support'*
- *Had MS-13 link to Langley Park; new to CC, new to LE, not part CC group— just freelancing*
- *Get bits and pieces of what we perceive as gang activity in Hampstead (e.g., series of car thefts in 2005; Hispanic males fled scene; vehicles recovered in PG County w/ MS-13 graffiti on them)*
- *At high risk are foster children or kids in other juvenile programs: detention centers, shelters, residential treatment centers; may have contact w/ kids or gang members from other areas*

#### Carroll County Public Schools - on Youth Gangs / Wannabes....

- *Have a number of 'juvenile groups' in Hampstead, banded together around sports, for social purpose; start trouble – potential to become serious problem*
- *Starting to see signs; still beginning stage; gives us a window to be proactive*
- *Have had students wearing gang paraphernalia – bandanas, colors –minor altercations in schools, but most of that is coming off the street*
- *When kids come in from Baltimore City, some dress in gang colors, use gang symbols, and really display the tough guy look. Most were in gangs where they came from; they had to be to survive. When they show up here, we get the counselors and vice principal involved right away. Let them know they don't have to do that here. That they are not going to get stabbed in the halls. After a short while they drop the tough guy persona. They realize they are safe.*
- *Whether or not we have the Crips, Bloods, etc. here now or coming here, we do have the wannabes, and they alone can create a real problem for us*

#### Community Based Organizations...

- *Gangs need kids that are at risk*
- *I hear from kids about gangs at Mt. Airy MS, Manchester MS, Liberty HS, Sykesville MS; mostly I think they are cliques, but can easily move into gangs*
- *You have youth on the streets at 2-3 pm, doing vandalism, this is where gang activity starts for a large percentage of youth*

#### Youth Survey

A one-page Community Gang Assessment Survey was administered to 243 county youth. The sample was drawn primarily from CCPS Community Learning Center (CLC) after school programs for middle and high school students. A small number of respondents were also reached through CCPS Family Forum events and Youth Service Bureau programs for youth. Fifty-three percent of respondents were male, 47% female. They ranged in age from 11 to 17 with a mean age of 13. With respect to race/ethnicity, 8% were African American, 6% Native American/American Indian, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 2% Asian, 68% white, and 11% 'other.' The high number of Native Americans may be due to respondents misunderstanding the term. Almost all (98%) respondents reported that they were in school.

When asked if gangs are a problem in the county, respondents reported ‘yes, definitely’ (16%), ‘yes, somewhat’ (26%), ‘no, not really’ (35%), and ‘no, not at all’ (23%). A sub-sample of non-CLC youth (N=16) were asked about their own gang related behavior. Fully half reported some level of gang involvement: asked to join a gang (29%), thought about joining a gang (21%), hang out with gang members (29%), joined a gang but left (7%), and joined a gang and still in it (7%).

Respondents were asked a short series of questions about their perceptions of and familiarity with gangs. Table 10 indicates that two-thirds of youth think gangs are in their community, while only a third actually know of any gangs or gang activity. Nearly a third report having seen or dealt with gang members, one in five report having felt afraid, and half believe young people are being asked to join gangs. Twenty percent report knowing someone in their community that is thinking about joining a gang, roughly a third know someone in a gang, and 17% said they had a friend who was in a gang.

**Table 10.**

<b>Community Gang Assessment Survey – Youth</b>	<b>(N=243)</b>	
	<b>Yes (%)</b>	<b>No (%)</b>
Do you think there are gangs in your own community (town, city, neighborhood)?	66	34
Do you know of any gangs or gang activity in your community?	35	65
Have you ever seen or dealt with a gang or gang member in your community?	31	69
Have you ever felt afraid of a gang or gang member in your community?	21	78
Do you think young people in your community are being asked to join gangs?	50	50
Do you know anyone in your community who is thinking about joining a gang?	20	80
Do you know anyone in your community who is in a gang?	32	68
Are any of your friends in a Carroll County gang?*	17	40
Are you in school?	98	2

\*This item had a ‘Don’t Know’ option, it was checked by 43% of respondents.

### *Potential factors contributing to gang problems*

Like all risk behaviors, there are a myriad of factors that contribute to gang problems and those factors depend somewhat on the reasons the gang originated in the first place. The OJJDP Guide (p. 40) indicates that gangs emerge for different reasons:

*... one way of viewing gangs is along a continuum of degree of organization, from groups which hang out in shopping malls; to small clusters of friends who band together to commit crimes; to street gangs comprised of groups of adolescents and young adults who form a semi-structured operation and engage in delinquent and criminal behavior; to adult organizations which engage in criminal activity for economic reasons. In contrast to adult gangs, youth gangs exist mainly for social reasons linked to the adolescent period. They give adolescents a feeling of belonging to the peer group and a special identity, which adolescents often describe as a “family feeling.”*

The nature of gang problems depends on where the gang sits on that continuum; ‘small clusters of friends who band together to commit crimes’ pose less of a threat to a community than ‘adult organizations which engage in criminal activity for economic reasons.’ Nonetheless, those small clusters of friends can and do create problems for communities. Indeed, youth gang members engage in significantly more criminal behavior than members of delinquent, but not gang-involved, groups; they have higher rates of police contact, more arrests, and more drug related offenses.

In our study, Gang Task Force Members and key informant interview respondents indicated that the primary factor contributing to gang problems in Carroll County was the lucrative drug trade. In addition, there was deep concern about law enforcement’s capacity to gather and share gang intelligence and for the courts to fully prosecute gang-related crimes. In addition, following a sweep of arrests in the past year, there is disagreement among law enforcement about the extent to which the problem still exists.

- *Wherever there are drugs, there’s money; wherever there’s money, you have gangs coming into town (LE)*
- *More local drug sales. Groups selling drugs making money big time...I’m waiting for a drug war (CBO)*
- *I would say drug activity is up from recent years. I can see where dealers are set up. I would say about half are gang members, that might be conservative (LE)*
- *The majority of violent crime is linked to drug activity (e.g., obtaining money to purchase drugs, selling drugs, or retribution for drug-related rivalry) [LE]*
- *It’s a quick way to make money. A juvenile can get caught 3-4 times before they do anything to the kids. That makes young drug runners attractive to adult gangs (CCPS)*
- *The problem is not being addressed enough by prosecutors or law enforcement (LE)*
- *Circumstances with the Crips demonstrates how quickly and easily a gang can infiltrate a community (LE)*
- *We just don’t have staff to keep up with it (LE)*
- *Law enforcement has not acted soon enough on the problem (LE)*

- *Crips principals have been beheaded as a result of two-year undercover investigation (multi-county, multi-jurisdiction investigation); we arrested 53 people w/ a variety of charges (LE)*
- *I have seen dozens of Bloods in CC who have never been arrested for anything; a small percentage is responsible for most of the violent crime and drug connections (LE)*

Other factors contributing to gang problems include not enough for youth to do, social conditions that foster youth gang involvement, a lack of parental supervision, and recruitment by older gang members.

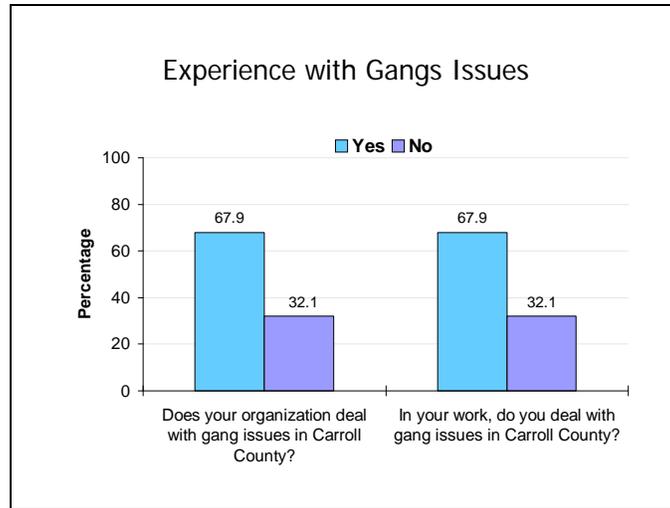
- *Have more things for kids to do (LE)*
- *Survey the schools, find out what the kids think; offer alternative activities for teens, whether an underage dance club, a place for them to go and hang out where they are not on the streets... get kids into activities where they have something to do; get parents more involved in supervising their kids, being invested in their kids (CBO)*
- *They are getting financial benefit from drug sales, theft; they are getting rewarded intrinsically with a huge adrenaline rush; they have a high threshold of excitement and look for the next exciting thing; they need opportunities to take safe and calculated risks' (w/zip lines, rock wall climbing, white water rafting) (CCPS)*
- *Teens need a place they want to hang out, feel safe, make friends, feel welcome (CBO)*
- *Work to not let the gangs be created in the first place; DSS, DJS has to work together; we have kids from broken families whose moms are on drug; these kids go searching for something (e.g., goth kids, suicidal kids); they all coming from pain of something not right at home (CCPS)*
- *Most of the kids that join the gangs are looking for families; the same reason you join a gang are the same reasons an adult would join the Knights of Columbus; they take care of their own; it's a feeling of belonging (CBO)*
- *It's the same risk and protective factors that are going to drive people into drugs, gangs, teen pregnancy, violence – find out where is the risk, who is most at risk; kids need a sense of belonging / need for recognition and power (CBO)*
- *Knowing that there are members from some of the major name gangs from around the country in our county puts our local youth at a higher risk of joining in with those activities; we have always had a lot of wannabe gangs in our county, this unfortunately gives them the opportunity to move into the big time; gangs prey upon such youth to do the work for them*
- *Been keeping track since 2002; I saw 30-year old Crips come to CC; they recruited five to six 18-22 years olds who in turn are now recruiting 14-17 year olds; there is definitely recruiting in HS this year; they are running a very lucrative drug business*

### ***Current efforts to address gangs and gang-involved youth***

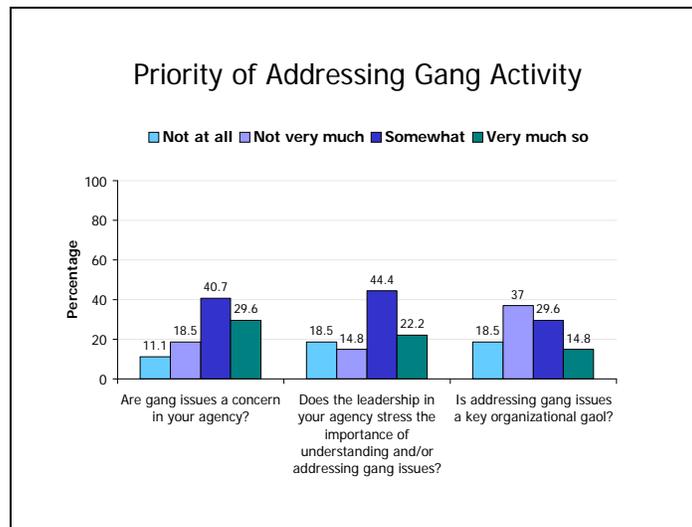
In their survey, task force members answered a series of questions about their own experience working with gangs and about what their organization does to address gang issues. Half of the respondents had experience dealing with gang members in Carroll County and slightly more than a third outside of the county. The extent of experience with gangs ranged from high levels of experience among select law enforcement officials (e.g., officers, prosecutors), to moderate

levels among school personnel (e.g., principals reported receiving Gang 101 training), and much lower levels among direct service providers (e.g., CBO staff – counselors, therapists). As evidenced in Tables 11 and 12, roughly two-thirds of respondents reported that their organization deals with gang issues, that they personally deal with gang issues, that gang issues are a concern in their agency, and that the leadership in their agency stresses the importance of understanding and/or addressing gang issues. However, less than half state that addressing gang issues is a key organizational goal.

**Table 11.**



**Table 12.**



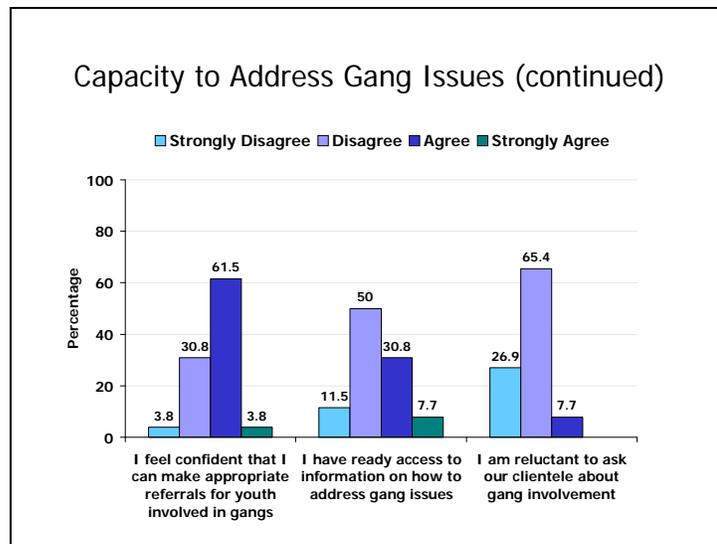
When asked if their agency offered services to address gang issues in the county, two-thirds said no. Among those who said yes, they reported a variety of activities.

- *Train educators - tell tale signs for gang activity, i.e. colors, graffiti, etc.*
- *School programs and presentations*

- *We look for ways to partner with communities to offer free-time programming for youth to help fill their free time*
- *We have worked with the various law enforcement agencies in the county to share information related to criminal gang activity*
- *We have targeted prosecutions against known gang members and have asked for tougher penalties*
- *We are working with other State's Attorney's Offices from around the state to lobby the General Assembly to pass a state RICO statute to address gang activity*
- *We facilitate exchange of information between law enforcement agencies – e.g., set up monthly meeting to exchange information re: gang related activities and other crime investigations*

Finally, survey respondents were asked about their capacity to address gang issues. Table 13 indicates that roughly two-thirds of respondents are confident in making referrals for gang involved youth, but less than half have ready access to information about how to address gangs. The vast majority is not reluctant to ask clientele about gang involvement, though there is room for improvement as only a quarter said ‘strongly disagree.’

**Table 13.**



## ***Recommendations for Addressing the Carroll County Gang Problem***

Survey and interview respondents offered many suggestions for addressing the gang issue including: acknowledge the gang problem; use a multi-faceted approach; act now; develop systems for law enforcement to consistently gather and share gang intelligence; increase police presence and enforcement; raise awareness community wide; provide comprehensive prevention education for youth, parents, schools; provide advanced gang training for providers and law enforcement; and offer opportunities that promote positive youth development.

### **Acknowledge the Gang Problem**

- *Need to make sure CC will accept that they have a gang problem (CCPS)*
- *People are in denial in CC and the more people on the lookout the better (CCPS)*
- *We are dealing with both home grown and imported problems; of course in CC everyone thinks all problems are imported (CBO)*
- *Do not minimize youth gangs/wannabes, that's no better than denying the problem altogether (LE)*

### **Act Now**

- *From a pure prevention angle, start immediately before it gets out of control (CBO)*
- *We are in a great position to prevent (CBO)*
- *Be proactive, not reactive; avoid playing catch up (CCPS)*
- *CC needs to move forward, aggressively (CCPS)*
- *Need to be out in front of this (LE)*

### **Use a Multi-faceted Approach**

- *Start small across the board (LE)*
- *Can't start with just one idea; need game plan with the educational system, legal system, youth, and parents; hit all angles (CBO)*
- *Address broader issues / needs of youth (e.g., access to services, particularly mental health)[CBO]*
- *Address risk and protective factors (CBO)*
- *We need to have more assets in our community (CCPS)*

### **Gather and Share Intelligence**

- *CC has segmented law enforcement structure – Sheriff's Office, MD State Police, and 5 different city police departments – we don't all operate the same computer systems so we don't have access to data; we need access to the same info., so as individuals travel between communities and that person is stopped, when we pop that name up we know as much about them as the police department does where that person lives (LE)*
- *Need to know the gangs that are established, who affiliates are, who they are connected to so we have a broader understanding of influence / motives.*
- *Gathering 'intel' re: what respondent sees in and out of jail [LE]*
- *Need to know which gangs are active / clearly ID gangs- current and emerging*
  - *Number of gangs*
  - *Members - background / where from*
  - *Nature of activities (e.g., selling drugs, theft)*

- Targets of acts of violence
- Age ranges of members
- *Recruitment*
  - *Methods of*
  - *Location / target communities (e.g., Bishop Garth Apartments, Greens in Westminster)*
  - *Characteristics of targeted youth (e.g., age)*
- *The level of risk; there are ways to look at kids who are most at risk for joining gangs; Where kids are spending their free time and how*
- *Need to get as much intelligence and coordination as possible; establish a gang database (GangNet) in CC and share among all law enforcement departments (LE)*
- *Need to do assessment to determine which departments have technology to handle info. / manage hardware) [LE]*
- *Need a centralized database where law enforcement can share information that is as detailed as possible (e.g., car individual was driving, who person hangs out with, whether there was gang related wear [dress], who is posting the bond, etc.); law enforcement agencies need to be able to share information in a confidential, secure way that can be tapped into easily; information needs to be accurate, available, and comprehensive (LE)*
- *When the police find out or realize we have a new group such as MS-13 selling drugs, they need to continue to share information with the school system, even though gang members are mostly adults; kids can get pulled in and we need to know that (CCPS)*
- *Take stock in what detention center personnel have to say, they have all the time in the world to gather information with incarcerated gang members (LE)*

### **Law Enforcement – Presence and Enforcement**

- *There are only 225 police officers in the county and about 40 on the street at a time; you can't do anything with those kinds of numbers; we need to increase law enforcement (CCPS)*
- *CC has the second lowest crime rate in MD (LE)*
- *Need OT for police officers to increase their presence in hotspots / Westminster, Taneytown – areas w/greater gang activity (LE)*
- *Police – we need a very strong community presentation, high visibility by police...where parents and kids can talk to police one-on-one; police could make house calls (CBO)*
- *Need multi-lingual (particularly Spanish) law enforcement officers*
- *It's difficult for people who don't speak English to report crimes; when we make stops, it's hard to determine if there is gang activity when we don't speak the language (LE)*
- *Need new laws pertaining to gang involvement: 1) need a statewide Rico Statute – a racketeering statute, like a conspiracy statute; and 2) need to enhance penalties for gang involvement (LE)*
- *Need more suppression and enforcement w/narcotics trade; lock up – need to prosecute*
- *Of those clearly identified, we need to be extremely aggressive – step on them, especially as adults, let them know we are going to kick your ass, break you up, take you (CCPS)*
- *We need to address enforcement, prevention and intervention at every level; start small but cover all areas; look at what you truly need and what you can do without; the database is going to be free; HIDA is getting a database for whole state; CC may see 1-2 new gang members a day, you don't need to hire somebody new to take care of entering that data, just be more efficient with who you have*

### **Raise Awareness – Community-wide**

- *There is too much concern about political and economic fallout of admitting you have gangs (LE)*
- *Educate the general public that there is a problem, solicit ways of getting the public involved in helping*
- *I feel like a broken record--educate everyone we can--even young children we think may be at risk; I would hope this is a preemptive strike*
- *Education and information sharing... would reduce fear factor (LE)*
- *Knowledge is power and ignorance is not bliss; people are better off understanding what is going on around them. Gangs are not new...society has allowed gangs to be romanticize; kids and adults need to recognize that gang activity centers around criminal activity (CCPS)*
- *We have to make sure people are aware, need to embrace multi-culturalism, we have become more estranged from multiculturalism; putting the info out works well, get things out in front of people, it's better in the long run; do it bit by bit (CCPS)*
- *Teach GREAT - Gang Resistance and Education Training (LE)*
- *Interviewer: Are you concerned increased awareness about gangs will scare the community?*
  - The only time that a community can feel threatened is when agencies aren't validating their concerns or the threats they feel (CCPS)*
  - Frightening people is not bad; you're soliciting their help to become part of the solution; people will feel more empowered to mediate issues and come up with solution; law enforcement can't do it on their own; they are reactive, whereas citizens have to be proactive (CCPS)*
- *Work with the media to get info out – police are famous for not wanting to work with the media because they have been burned too many times; call and schedule interviews about something gang related; you have more control that way*

### **Prevention/Intervention**

- *There is nothing for teens to do in this county, provide them with the means to get rid of their ability to hang out on the streets and malls; make programs available for jobs, tutoring if needed, and recreational things to do with maximum provision of chaperone; if I thought I could get enough grants, I would like to start a teen center for ages 12- 18*
- *Get kids involved with what's important; there are too many influences out there driving kids in different directions; peer pressure is more peripheral; look at environment – media, music; the influence is overwhelming (CBO)*
- *Use recreation, activities, mentors, other strategies to keep them out of gangs (CCPS)*
- *Give the kids a safe haven, things to do, a place to go (CCPS)*
- *Raise self esteem with kids; they join gangs because they need acceptance and belonging; find ways to fulfill those needs (CBO)*
- *We need to have more assets in our community. Look at Search Institute stuff; concentrate on assets because kids will go to or form their own groups (CCPS)*
- *Provide appealing alternatives, something has to happen for them to want to get out [of gangs]*

- *We operate with a waiting list year around; schools, DSS, DJS ...we all struggle together getting the kids the treatment that they need; the kids that are involved with gangs are likely kids from dysfunctional families; there is a whole mental health component (CBO)*
- *Need better education and job training programs (majority of gang members are HS dropouts) [LE]*
- *Need good vocational training and mentoring (CBO)*
- *Need better drug treatment programs / ways to help when they get out of CCDC (LE)*
- *After-school/summer school/remedial education programs -- in order to prevent gang activity, we must catch the kids at the late elementary school/middle school level -- giving the kids an option other than hanging out on the streets unsupervised*
- *We need to have increased job and education programs tied to drug treatment programs so that we can avoid recidivism when gang members get out; these guys (and gals) join gangs and stay in gangs because it is profitable socially (have friends and allies on the streets) and profitable economically (make more money dealing drugs and shaking people down than they can at a fast food restaurant; so, we need to help avoid them re-offending when they get out*

### **Training**

- *Training all educators and law enforcement (e.g., juvenile services, parole and probation, courts) in gang recognition; people need to understand what info to get*
- *We need to train people how to gather information and how to be specific- ask why were they there, who were they with, what were they doing, etc*
- *There should be some level of very basic gang awareness at least available upon request; LE trainers should teach LE; for the public, if they want info, they should be able to get general info on what they are seeing and a contact about where to report it; the media definitely could be a part of awareness building*
- *The community, schools, parents, and local government need to be educated on gangs; the more that people deny or minimize this problem the worse the problem will get; compared to Baltimore City we have a low gang population; however, we still have a population and the problems that go along with gang members; Carroll County is in denial and there needs to be education about gangs; gangs are not just inner city African American males, people have a misconception of what a gang is*
- *Make sure training goes beyond Gangs 101, take it to a higher level*

This concludes the major highlights of our data collection efforts. For a more detailed understanding of the findings please refer to the results summarized in the appendices. The next section continues to answer the key questions outlined in the Results Accountability framework.

Question 3a. What indicators can you use to measure if you have been successful?

Given where Carroll County is in its assessment and planning process it is premature to focus on specific indicators as there is need for more information, especially with respect to youth gang activity. Nonetheless, some possible indicators are:

- Types of gang related crimes reported by law enforcement
- Gang related incidents
- Citizen perception of gang presence
- Citizen perception of gang crime
- Youth reports of gang activity
- Providers' perception of gang activity
- Gang related activity in schools

Question 3b. What are 2-3 primary indicators you could use to measure your progress?

- Types of gang related crimes reported by law enforcement
- Youth reports of gang activity

Question 3c. What is the historic baseline?

Adult gang presence and activity seems to be trending upwards in recent years. There is a lack of understanding of youth gang involvement at this time.

Question 3d. Is indicator heading in the right direction?

No, there is significant concern about the apparent rise in gang activity and related drug activity in recent years.

Question 4. What is the story behind the data and the direction it is heading?

As the results indicated, the story behind the baseline is a profitable drug market, minimal gang competition, lack of awareness community-wide, law enforcement not fully prepared to manage gang issues, school personnel minimizing the gang issue (e.g., wannabes, baby gangs), direct service providers unaware of and not trained to cope with gang issues, and reluctance to fully acknowledge gang problem.

Question 5. Who are the partners who have a role to play in doing better?

The partners who have been involved in the planning process are listed in Table 1. The Gang Task Force has been essential to the assessment process. An interagency and interdisciplinary task force needs to continue assessing, planning and implementing gang-related efforts in the county. Families have not been involved in the planning process to date due to the extremely tight timeframe of the project and it's timing at the start of the school year. However, as the Task Force's work continues, families will be engaged in the planning process. Youth have been involved in the assessment, not as Task Force members but as survey respondents. We had the opportunity to hear from over 243 youth in our Community Gang Assessment. Youth will be

enrolled in future planning efforts. The other group the Task Force will try to engage more in the future is the faith-based community. While represented in our data collection efforts, there was minimal faith-based representation on the Gang Task Force.

Question 6. What strategies will work to “turn the curve” and make things better?

Please see the recommendations section under the results (Question 3)

Question 7. What is your action plan?

As previously discussed, a key action will be ongoing assessment of the gang issue. The Gang Task Force learned a great deal in this initial assessment, what we refer to as Phase I. A Phase II assessment would enable the task force to more fully assess in a manner consistent with what is described in the OJJDP Guide. For example, it would enable us to hear from a wider audience (e.g., gang members, parents, outside experts) in more comprehensive ways (focus groups, face-to-face interviews). The Task Force has enough information to get started on some specific implementation efforts, and it is important to do so. But, we must continue the assessment to ensure that implementation efforts accurately target the needs.

In addition to continued assessment, our plan is to respond to the recommendations that emerged from the study, to sustain the Gang Task Force in some capacity and ensure that it is representative of the community, to form Task Force sub-committees as needed that target specific needs or areas (e.g., prevention, intervention, suppression), and to develop a detailed strategic plan that is interagency, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive (covers prevention, intervention, and suppression). As indicated in the recommendations, the Gang Task Force will encourage county leadership to acknowledge the gang problem, to act fast, and to utilize a multifaceted approach in planning prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts.

Question 7a. What are your prioritized strategies?

**Priority 1: Gather and Share Intelligence**

This priority area has the clearest implications for action. The data strongly indicates a need for law enforcement to consistently collect, report, and share intelligence about youth and adult gangs. Such intelligence is needed to interrupt gang operations and shift the balance of power. Furthermore, there is a need to improve communication and cooperation between local and state law enforcement agencies and between law enforcement and other county agencies such as schools and youth serving organizations.

Possible Strategies

- Law enforcement and the State Attorney’s Office will continue to address gathering and sharing intelligence
- Develop plan to share gang intelligence among all stakeholders – law enforcement, community based groups (e.g., schools), and the public.
- Tap into existing resources – don’t re-invent the wheel, learn from other jurisdictions
- Seek to obtain GangNet – a database for gathering and sharing intelligence

- Utilize outside expertise to assist with development of communication systems and training
- Train officers to talk to, ask questions of, and interact with gang members on the street; intelligence gathering takes place on the street, not in an office
- There is no such thing as a wannabe; train officers to gather intelligence about up and coming youth gangs, do not minimize their potential to create problems

## **Priority 2: Training**

Utilize existing resources to get county professionals from all relevant disciplines trained on gang matters. There are tremendous resources in the field about training opportunities, best practices, model programs, and tested strategies. Tap into state and federal governmental and non-governmental resources; enlist the expertise of local jurisdictions that have been dealing with gang issues for the past 10-20 years; and pursue all feasible gang training opportunities.

### Possible Strategies

- Attend conferences or other training events such as the 2006 National Summit on Gang Violence this December in Arlington, VA
- Accept offers for training made by local and state police such as Sgt. Eways of MD State Police
- Review the literature for best practices, model programs
- Look into Train the Trainer programs
- Develop and/or adapt curriculum
- Develop a cadre of master trainers in the county
- Offer Gangs 101, 102, 103....etc.; ensure a higher level of gang training for law enforcement, school administrators, and providers

## **Priority 3: Raise Awareness**

Raise community awareness of gang issues and mobilize community for action.

### Possible Strategies

- Hold a Community Forum about gang issues:
  - Utilize Positive Youth Development approach - focus on strengths/assets
  - Conduct community panel presentation – ensure that panel composition is interagency, interdisciplinary, and reflects make up of community
  - Address basic gang issues (e.g., how to identify signs of gangs and gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies)
  - Participants leave with ideas about five things that they could do to promote Positive Youth Development
- Host Family/Community Forums county wide with panels comprised of gang and non gang involved youth, gang experts, CCPS, law enforcement
- Utilize the media to raise awareness – newspapers, radio, TV
- Conduct a targeted communication campaign – fliers, poster, facts sheets

#### **Priority 4: Prevention/Intervention**

The Carroll County Local Management Board will come together to carefully examine assessment findings relative to prevention and intervention. Care will be taken to identify strategies to address gaps in services and establish a long-term plan to create and/or expand prevention and intervention efforts. Prevention efforts will target all youth with a special emphasis on late elementary and middle school age youth. Intervention efforts will target high-risk youth that may or may not be gang involved. Both prevention and intervention efforts will utilize a Positive Youth Development approach such as the Search Institute's Developmental Assets.

#### Possible Strategies

- Offer after school programs at every school in the county, particularly middle schools
- Continue to conduct Youth Violence Assessments
- Continue Brief Strategic Family Therapy
- Expand opportunities for recreation among high risk youth; make it affordable
- Youth mentoring programs to offer opportunities for prosocial involvement
- Job training (e.g., interviewing skills, resume development) to facilitate greater job opportunities

#### Question 7b. For what strategies will you provide local funding?

Following the LMB retreat on November 15th, opportunities for one-time only funding will be explored. Available monies will need to be expended by June 30, 2007. Possible strategies include assessment and evaluation, training, and community forums.

#### Question 7c. For which strategies do you plan on requesting funding?

In the very near future, the Carroll County Sheriff's Office will be requesting funds from the U.S. Department of Justice to assist law enforcement with developing systems to gather and share intelligence data, and to fund a project director who would be responsible for sustaining and guiding the Gang Task Force, planning a Gang Summit, and providing gang training. While the county is likely to also request funds from other agencies, decisions have not been made about that yet.

### **Summary**

*Gang activity and violence are on the rise throughout the U.S. and it is not just an issue for larger cities. Gang related homicides in the U.S. are up 50% since 1999. While the problem of gangs once only occupied major metropolitan areas, today gang violence occurs in rural areas as well as urban ones. According to a recent report from the National Youth Gang Center, there are over 760,000 people in almost 24,000 gangs across the country. Gangs and gang activity have spread throughout communities nationwide, drawing members from all walks of life. (The National Summit on Gang Violence, <http://www.gangsummit.org>)*

This assessment has been an important first step in beginning to understand the nature and extent of gang activity in the county. It gave voice to a range of providers who shared their views, concerns and recommendations. Youth weighed in as well with their perceptions of and familiarity with local gang issues. The county appears to be ahead of the gang problem, but only slightly. An imperative next step is for a Gang Task Force to convene, discuss the findings and recommendations, and come up with concrete strategies for a long-term strategic plan. The OJJDP Guide suggests five strategies to address key gang concerns: 1) community mobilization, 2) opportunities provision, 3) social intervention, 4) suppression, and 5) organizational change and development. The recommendations offered by our respondents very much align with those five areas. Carroll County is in a good place to proactively move forward with its gang planning and implementation efforts. Indeed, that is what it will take to stay ahead of the rising gang tide.