



A Law Enforcement
Official's Guide to the

OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

A guide to provide law enforcement leaders with an overview of the **OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model**—a framework for addressing youth gang problems

INTRODUCTION

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model is an evidence-based framework for the coordination of multiple data-driven, anti-gang and violence-reduction strategies to address serious, violent, and entrenched youth street gang problems. The Model combines prevention, intervention, and suppression tactics that reach beyond enforcement to address the root causes of criminal gang activity within a community. This framework provides a mechanism to pull together disjointed, fragmented approaches into an organized plan of action.

Implementation is guided by a Steering Committee made up of decision makers from local agencies and organizations that hold responsibility for addressing a community's gang problem. The Model facilitates community involvement and uses a multidisciplinary team, along with street outreach, to directly intervene with those gang-involved youth and young adults most likely to be involved in violent gang-related behaviors. Suppression strategies are focused on addressing the most serious crime problems, including violence.

Comprehensive Gang Model Administrative Structure



Five Core Strategies



PROVEN SUCCESS

In 1987, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) began supporting a research project to design a comprehensive approach for reducing and preventing youth gang violence. Directed by Dr. Irving Spergel at the University of Chicago, this project resulted in the development of the Spergel Model of Gang Intervention and Suppression, later renamed the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model.

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model provides a response to gangs on multiple levels that works by coordinating strategies among sectors such as law enforcement, education, criminal justice, social services, community-based agencies, outreach programs, and grassroots community groups. The Model has been tested with more than 20 years of implementation experience in communities large and small and has shown positive results in reducing serious gang-related crimes in affected communities.

Essential Elements in Implementing the Model

- » **Acknowledge the Problem**—if denial is present, it must be confronted
- » **Establish a Steering Committee**—made up of decision makers from agencies and organizations that have responsibility for addressing the gang problem
- » **Conduct a Thorough Assessment**—that specifically defines the problem, offenders, and locations
- » **Design a Strategic Plan**—based on the assessment findings
- » **Define Relevant Services and Activities**—for key agencies
- » **Establish a Multidisciplinary Intervention Team**—to serve as the primary service delivery strategy targeting gang-involved youth
- » **Plan for Ongoing Assessment** and **Long-Term Sustainability**



COLLABORATION

Law enforcement plays a critical role in addressing gang problems; however, it is important to understand that enforcement alone will never stem the flow of youth gang involvement. A community simply cannot arrest its way out of serious, violent, and entrenched youth gang problems. Law enforcement agencies must collaborate with citizens and organizations to implement strategies that address both the immediate threat of youth gangs and the conditions that allow them to exist. The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model provides a structure to guide this process.



AGENCY COMMITMENT

Implementing the Model requires a commitment of resources by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies serving an impacted community. Law enforcement officials should commit to taking on a leadership role in implementing the Model within their community. Examples of this commitment may include:

- » A personal commitment by the law enforcement agency head to serve on a Steering Committee that drives the process.
- » Potentially serving as the project's lead agency (providing fiscal management and administrative support).
- » Providing data and analysis to support the initial local assessment and ongoing evaluation.
- » Providing law enforcement resources to carry out suppression activities (investigation and enforcement).
- » Establishment of a multiagency gang task force.
- » Committing personnel to participate in a multidisciplinary Intervention Team.
- » Conducting prevention and education programs.
- » Supporting community mobilization activities.



ADVANTAGES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

- » Encourages communitywide acknowledgement of the gang problem.
- » Spreads responsibility and accountability for the gang problem across the community—it is no longer solely a law enforcement issue.
- » Connects a wide array of resources into an organized system of mutually reinforcing strategies
- » Supports community-oriented policing efforts by fostering partnership, improving community safety, and reducing fear.
- » Provides a comprehensive assessment that helps focus limited law enforcement resources based on intelligence analysis.

GETTING STARTED

Law enforcement agencies should take a leadership role in bringing a solution for youth gang problems that impact their communities. A chief of police, sheriff, or director can help introduce the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model by taking the following initial steps:



- » Visit the National Gang Center's Web site at <https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Comprehensive-Gang-Model> to access the following resources:
 - OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model Online Overview
 - OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model Assessment Guide
 - OJJDP Comprehensive Model Implementation Manual
- » Lead the effort to form a preliminary Steering Committee, consisting of local agency heads and decision makers, to review and evaluate the Model.
- » Begin an assessment of the youth gang problem following the OJJDP Gang Model Assessment Guide.

OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

FAQs



Does the Model work for all types of gang problems?

While many of the strategies contained within the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model may be effective for a broad range of gang problems, the Model is specifically designed to address serious, violent, and entrenched youth and young adult gang problems.



Our law enforcement agency is committed to Community Oriented Policing, Problem Oriented Policing, or Intelligence-Led Policing. Is this Model compatible with these philosophies?

Yes! In fact, the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model requires that law enforcement agencies develop collaborative partnerships with service agencies and the community; conduct methodical problem assessment, analysis, and response planning; and focus law enforcement resources based on intelligence analysis.



What advantages does the Model hold over other gang reduction strategies and initiatives?

In a word, it is comprehensive. The Model combines prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies to reach beyond enforcement to address the root causes of criminal gang activity within a community. The Model spreads responsibility and accountability for resolving the gang problem throughout the community and among its service providers—the gang problem is no longer solely a law enforcement problem.



How will the Model work with other programs and services already established within the community?

During the assessment process, your community should identify existing programs and services, as well as gaps in existing resources. The Model recommends engaging existing programs and services that have been proven to work with gang members, rather than duplicating them.



How much does it cost to implement the Model?

Cost will vary depending on the size and scope of the youth gang problem. Some communities may already have the resources necessary to conduct an assessment and implement elements of the Model. Other communities may need to seek financial assistance with the cost of conducting an assessment, hiring program staff, and implementing strategies.



How long does it take to implement the Model?

Often, stakeholders search for quick fixes to address an outbreak in gang violence. Although the Model can and should be implemented alongside more immediate responses, it is not a quick fix. It is important for stakeholders to understand that proper assessment and planning are essential and will take time. For example, depending on the availability of data and research personnel, the assessment process can take from 3 to 12 months.

For More Information

The **National Gang Center** provides technical assistance and resources to support the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model. For more information, please contact us at information@nationalgangcenter.gov or visit our Web site at www.nationalgangcenter.gov.



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