



**COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
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1st Year Evaluation Report on Palm Beach County's Youth Violence Prevention Project

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Presentation Outline

- I. Introduction**
- II. Evaluation**
- III. Year One Findings: Implementation, Services Delivered, and Outcomes**
- IV. Summary and Discussion**



I - Introduction

- **In 2004, and in response to a series of violent and often fatal crimes that were occurring in the County, the CJC initiated a study to determine if the County was experiencing a violent crime epidemic.**
- **Among the study's major findings were:**
 - **The County's overall crime rate had declined from 1990-2005.**
 - **Violent crime, however, including those involving firearms, had increased, particularly from 2000 to 2004.**
 - **The County's violent crime offenders were generally adolescents or young adults between 15 to 24 years of age.**
 - **The study's findings identified areas with high concentrations of violent crimes, especially those committed with firearms.**



I - Introduction Cont.

- **These findings led the CJC to review what other communities across the country were doing to combat youth violence.**
- **It was reasoned that while Palm Beach County's youth violence problem mirrored youth violence in other communities, it was critical that a program specifically tailored for Palm Beach County be developed and implemented.**
- **Ultimately, Palm Beach County's youth violence prevention and reduction program involved an integration of key components of the national model for Youth Violence Prevention.**
- **Namely, these components are prevention, law enforcement, courts, and corrections.**



II – The Evaluation

- **Our evaluation is focused upon each site’s implementation of the program model and associated outcomes.**
- **We employ a quasi-experimental design, in which each of the program sites are termed experimental – each has a control site.**
- **Multiple items of qualitative and quantitative data have been collected and assessed in relation to each of the program’s implementation and outcomes (the outcomes reported are preliminary).**
- **From an evaluation perspective, given that the County’s violence prevention and reduction program initiative was to be implemented in 5 cities – it is expected that the implementation will vary to some degree from city to city.**



II – Evaluation: Data Sources

Prevention:

- ◆ Program-level data: monthly report (youths served, hours of services, programs offered)
- ◆ Individual-level data: youth demographics, arrest data, youth empowerment pre/post survey, staff surveys

Corrections:

- ◆ Program-level data: monthly report (clients served, programs offered)
- ◆ Individual-level data: client demographics, arrest data, staff surveys

Courts (countywide):

- ◆ Youth Violence Prevention Cases
- ◆ Gang-Related Cases
- ◆ FDLE 2006 and 2007 Law Enforcement Survey (pre/post by Prosecutor's Office)

Law Enforcement (countywide):

- ◆ Monthly report by agencies
- ◆ NIJ Gang Threat Assessment Survey (pre/post by VCTF)
- ◆ Violent Crime Task Force 2007 case report
- ◆ Law Enforcement Work Group protocol and initiatives documentation

Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE):

- ◆ Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data
- ◆ Computerized Criminal History data
- ◆ U.S. Census Bureau



III – Findings: Implementation

- ◆ Overall, sites have made significant progress in implementing the program's components during Year One:
- ◆ **Law enforcement and adult courts** developed goals collaboratively and have made progress in meeting their goals.
- ◆ **Juvenile courts** have developed goals and will begin implementation in Year Two.



III – Findings: Implementation

- ◆ **Corrections** (5 sites): Riviera Beach has met all three goals in year one of implementation. Four sites (Belle Glade, Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, and West Palm Beach) have developed plans for the development of the corrections component (specifically, JSCs) in Years Two and Three.
- ◆ **Prevention** (5 sites): Lake Worth, Riviera Beach, and West Palm Beach have met two of the three overarching goals in Year One. Belle Glade and Boynton Beach have not met the three goals in Year One. However, Boynton Beach has developed plans and initiatives to meet two of the three goals in Year Two. All four of the operational sites are meeting objectives that may lead to the accomplishment of the third goal (prevention of youth gang and violent crime involvement) by Year Three of implementation.



III – Findings: Services Provided

Prevention

- ◆ Combined, the 4 YECs (Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Riviera Beach, and West Palm Beach) provided structured program services, namely education, employment, and life skills to 2,424 county youth. This count is *not* unduplicated.
- ◆ The combined four program sites' YECs provided unstructured program services, namely recreational and site resources (e.g., computer lab, open gym), to 14,416 county youth (*not* unduplicated).
- ◆ Total county youth served by the YECs from February, 2007 through February 2008 was 16,840.



III – Findings: Services Provided

Corrections (Riviera Beach’s JSC) :

- ◆ Employment: average 3 types of services per month (e.g., job coach, vocational training, employment counseling)
 - **Total Served: 224**
- ◆ Education: GED assistance
 - **Total Served: 3**
- ◆ Reentry: average 3 types of services per month (e.g., legal assistance, driver’s license, bus pass)
 - **Total Served: 129**
- ◆ Collaborative Partnerships: ongoing participation in multiple job fairs
 - **Total Served: 521**
- ◆ Additional Community Outreach includes Palm Beach Community College; various businesses; hosting Ex-Offender Consortium; partnerships with DOC, and the Public Defender’s Office



III – Findings: Services Provided

Law Enforcement and Courts:

- ◆ Law Enforcement made significant progress with services provided in the following areas: equipment purchased and utilized, trainings development and administered, protocols developed, initiatives and patrols, community outreach.
- ◆ The State Attorney’s Office (SAO) developed a protocol for internal, systematic tracking of gang-related violent crime prosecutions.
- ◆ Courts survey and interview data indicate that the SAO recommends that this system become a more fully integrated, centrally-based intelligence system for collecting gang-related activity from all law enforcement and prosecution agencies.



III – Findings: Outcomes

Youth and Adult Recidivism Data (FDLE Computerized Criminal History data):

- ◆ From a sample of 573 participants in YEC and JSC structured programs, 44 individuals had arrest histories.
- ◆ 73% were arrested prior to involvement in the YVPP, but not during or after.



III – Findings: Outcomes

UCR Rates of Violent Crimes Reported to Law Enforcement:

- ◆ Three of the four program sites (Lake Worth, Riviera Beach, and West Palm Beach) experienced a decline between the actual crimes of murder, rape, assault, and robbery compared to the projections for those crimes based on multi-year trends in crime data.
- ◆ One of the program sites (Boynton Beach) experienced a slight increase in actual reported crimes of murder, rape, assault, and robbery compared to the projections for those crimes.
- ◆ In comparing the differences in reported crime for the control sites (Greenacres, Lake Park, Mangonia Park, and Royal Palm) with the program sites, the differences between actual and projected crime rates are less marked.



III – Findings: Outcomes

Economic Impact:

- ◆ A reduction in the reported county-level rates of violent crime (murder, rape, and assault) compared to the “projected” levels (absent the program) during the project’s first year of operations.
- ◆ These reported crime “reductions” (actual versus projected) during the project’s first year of operations resulted in an estimated long-term economic impact of \$4,377,730 in the four cities with the Youth Violence Prevention Project. The actual number of violent crimes reported to law enforcement in the four program sites for 2007 is lower than the rate “projected” for 2007 based on multi-year trends in the crime data.
- ◆ Source: U.S. Department of Justice, 1996



III – Findings: Outcomes

Economic Impact:

- ◆ County-wide reported violent crime reductions resulted in an estimated \$14,657,702 long-term economic impact during the first year of the Youth Violence Prevention Project's operation likely reflecting the county-wide impact of the law enforcement and courts components of the program.



III – Findings: Outcomes

Future Investment:

- ◆ Palm Beach County, through its Youth Violence Prevention Project efforts, can be seen as having invested in services and activities for its youth, young adults, and adults that can contribute to their educational success, improved self-concept, elevated plans for the future, and likelihood of non-criminal involvement.



III – Findings: Outcomes

Future Investment:

- ◆ While these findings reflect one year of implementation, findings from the program sites for years two and three will provide more conclusive results upon which the County can institutionalize its violence reduction efforts.
- ◆ However, a remaining challenge will be to place an increased emphasis on the importance of systematic and accurate data collection.