

BACKGROUND

The **Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative** is tackling the issue of youth violence with a comprehensive approach that incorporates evidenced-based strategies along with grass roots, youth- and community-created programs. While Seattle has experienced some of the lowest overall crime rates in recent years, the number of juvenile violent crime incidents continues to be a critical community issue. The City launched the Initiative in July 2009 to dramatically change how Seattle deals with youth violence.

GOALS

The goals of the Initiative are to achieve a 50% reduction in juvenile court referrals for violence and a 50% reduction in suspensions and expulsions from selected middle schools due to violence-related incidents.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE?

The Initiative focuses on about 1,500 youth ages 12-17 who:

- have been convicted of violent offenses and released;
- have been arrested but not detained;
- are middle school students at risk of chronic truancy or multiple suspensions due to violent behavior;
- are victims of violence who may be at risk of retaliation; and/or
- are gang involved.

The range of young people to be served is broad and their needs vary. Many youth have high levels of need and will receive case management and referrals to treatment-based services. Others will receive services that help them access opportunities and make positive choices.

Seattle's Initiative incorporates guidance and elements from both local community outreach and successful violence prevention programs in other cities. One consistent message that came through loud and clear was that government should not dictate all the Initiative plan details. In keeping with this advice, the City developed a plan that is built on community leadership. The plan is carried out by establishing community-based agencies as partners leading three neighborhood networks in Central, Southeast, and Southwest Seattle.

WHO ARE THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK AGENCIES?

The lead agencies coordinating Initiative efforts are Therapeutic Health Services, Southwest Youth and Family Services, and Rainier Vista Boys and Girls Club.

WHAT ARE THE SERVICES?

Young people will be referred to services through schools, community agencies, juvenile court, police, street outreach workers, and Seattle Parks and Recreation extended hours programs. The range of services coordinated at the community level include:

- youth employment and training;
- street outreach;
- case management;
- Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.);
- Mentoring;
- Community Matching Grant projects serving Initiative & Initiative-eligible youth; and
- Parks Power of Place extended hours youth-created programs.

In addition, school emphasis officers have been assigned to four schools: Aki Kurose, Denny and Washington Middle schools and South Shore K-8. Another critical component of the Initiative is the street outreach team made up of individuals with street credibility who meet youth "where they're at." The school-based officers and street outreach workers will listen, give young people guidance and information, assist them in conflict resolution and encourage them to make healthy, positive choices.

FUNDING

The City invests approximately \$5.6 million per year in the Initiative, which pays for the services and programs listed in this flyer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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