

City of Racine Special OJA Grant Proposal



Gang Crime Diversion/Juvenile Delinquency  
Prevention Initiative

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Submitted To:  
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### Project Abstract:

In partnership with the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance, the Racine Police Department, supported by a group of community partners, assembled to form a consortium of organizations committed to developing a joint community-wide crime reduction and neighborhood revitalization proposal under the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program. Our local contingent of partners (hereafter referred to as the Community Revitalization Collaborative), seeks to solicit Byrne funding under Category 1: Planning and Implementation.

### Problem Statement:

Located between the major cities of Milwaukee Wisconsin and Chicago Illinois, the City of Racine continues to experience juvenile delinquency and crime, recidivism and school drop-out at high rates. The problem is more prevalent within Census tracts 1 through 5. As noted in the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Policy Forum Comparative Analysis report for the Racine Unified School District, low student achievement has been identified as a contributing factor in juvenile delinquency, truancy, and student dropout rates. The following is an excerpt from the referenced public policy report:

**Student achievement:** Racine's test scores lag behind the state average in all grades and subjects examined: third grade reading, fourth grade reading and math, eighth grade reading and math, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math. However, in all areas except third grade reading and 10<sup>th</sup> grade math, RUSD scores improved over the year before. This improvement is tempered by the finding that white RUSD students score higher than African American and Hispanic students in every grade and subject. This racial achievement gap in Racine is smaller than the state's racial achievement gap in fourth and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, but larger than in eighth grade.

Gang intelligence data maintained by the City of Racine Police Department Special Investigations (Gang) Unit shows that a large percentage of students who become engaged in gang activity reside in census tracts 1 through 5. Many of the gang members and gang affiliates, and other youth involved in criminal activity are students enrolled in the Racine Unified School District.

Identification of Target Neighborhoods:

In response to decades of crime and disorder within the school districts surrounding Park High School and Horlick High School and surrounding junior high schools, community policing houses were opened within these geographic areas. Within these fragile neighborhoods, crime and disorder adversely impacts the quality of life for area residents and visitors, and most notably, at-risk students. More specifically, plaguing this area are a number of Part I crimes (which include homicide, robbery, burglary, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and arson), as well as chronic quality of life crimes (i.e. disorderly conduct, trespassing, criminal damage to property, weapons violations, narcotics in progress, theft, vandalism, truancy and similar crimes). Over the past five years the referenced crime and disorder has accounted for 24,901 calls-for-service, averaging 4,980 calls for service per year.

Target Neighborhood Distinction:

In the City of Racine, the public school system operates under the administration of the Racine Unified School District (RUSD). As of this time, and despite the fragile nature of, the geographical area identified for revitalization under this proposal has not been classified as a “Promise Neighborhood” under the Department of Education’s Promise Neighborhood initiative. The target neighborhood does not receive funding under the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Choice Neighborhood initiative. A community health center within the target area is currently operated under the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) charter maintained by the primary community healthcare center in Beloit, Wisconsin. The target neighborhood is not a recipient of Department of Treasury’s Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) funds.

### Cross-Sector List of Partners:

Following the announcement of federal capacity-building funding opportunities (2013 Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program Grant), a group of local stakeholders assembled to build a consortium of cross-sector partners to identify and connect evidence-based strategies that addressed crime, prison recidivism, and neighborhood revitalization. The local cross-sector partnership includes the following primary organizations:

- 1.) City of Racine Police Department
- 2.) Why Gangs/Gang Crime Diversion Task Force
- 3.) UW-Extension (Research Partner)
- 4.) Racine Vocational Ministries Community Re-entry Program
- 5.) Racine County Human Services
- 6.) Racine Unified School District
- 7.) Racine Community Outpost

Award recipients for the FY2013 Byrne grant will be announced in the fall of 2013. In drafting this proposal, it is the organizational objective of the Racine Police Department to restore the gang diversion services lost as a result of the loss of funding for GCDTF programming and services previously performed at local neighborhood COP houses.

### Why Target Neighborhood Needs Implementation Grant Support:

The Jacato Drive neighborhood was selected as the primary target for innovation strategies under this grant initiative due to the unique challenges of this area. In contrast to the surrounding community of single-family detached homes on neighboring streets, Jacato Drive features a grouping of 13 multi-unit apartment buildings constructed from 1963 to 1972. Concentrated within a geographic range of four city blocks, the series of apartment buildings on Jacato Drive has a total of 262 apartment units. Initially constructed as luxury apartment buildings in 1963, during the past 30 years, this series of apartments are now home to a large population of transient residents. Conditions within this community have long been associated with poverty, drug trafficking, gang activity, and related neighborhood disorder.

As a result of crime and related disorder on Jacato Drive, property values in the surrounding area (single-family homes on neighboring streets) have been adversely impacted. Following the recent subprime mortgage crisis, a number of the apartment buildings on Jacato were lost to foreclosure, causing greater economic pressures within this already fragile community. Over 50 percent of the investors who previously owned property in this area have lost their units to foreclosure. The foreclosures were caused by a number of factors, most notably, the saturation of transient tenants who were frequently evicted.

To address problems on Jacato Drive and throughout the surrounding community, a single-family home in this area was purchased for use as a community policing house. Plans are currently underway to build an addition onto this COP house in order to expand the capacity to facilitate a greater range of programs and services subject to the unique needs of this neighborhood. Under the proposed project, Why Gang topic facilitators will resume intervention services performed at the Mead Street COP house under the 2002 Gang Crime Diversion Task Force initiative. Why Gangs personnel will work with the Racine Police Department, in concert with the Mayor's Gang Collaborative, to facilitate a coordinated strategic and operational plan to address chronic crime, juvenile truancy and recidivism, through structured intervention and gang resistance programming.

#### Project Goals:

Consistent with the goals and objectives achieved under the "Power of Partnerships" community policing initiatives implemented in Racine ([http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/goldstein/1999/99-50\(F\).pdf](http://www.popcenter.org/library/awards/goldstein/1999/99-50(F).pdf)), the goal of this project is to reduce crime through leveraging partnerships. Under this project, the Community Revitalization Collaborative seeks to reduce Part I crime in the target by 25 percent, reduce youthful offender recidivism by 10 percent, reduce truancy by 10 percent, detect and disrupt gang activity, improve the quality of life for areas residents, and create a stable, crime neutralized

environment designed to attract new developers to reinvest in the formerly depressed housing stock in this community.

Project Period:

Comprehensive and coordinated strategic planning for this project will take place over the course of 18-months. Revitalization initiatives within the target area will be implemented over the course of 36 months, with results being aggressively monitored, recorded, and evaluated over a three+ year period.

Amount of Funding Requested:

The Community Revitalization Collaborative is seeking \$180,800 in funding in support of the proposed project (projected program period, 18-months). During the initial stage, the Community Revitalization Collaborative will complete all required planning activities, after which the collaborative will submit a formal multifaceted placed-based revitalization plan, complete with an updated narrative, line item budget, and full project detail worksheet articulating the activities to be completed during the implementation phase.

Scope of Services:

Why Gangs LLC will provide intervention service to the Racine Unified School District (RUSD), in conjunction with the Racine County Human Service Department. Why Gangs will offer a 10-week Comprehensive Intervention for Aggressive Youth course using the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) evidence-based curriculum. Youth will be serviced primarily during school hours at designated RUSD high schools (Park/Horlick). Students exhibiting at-risk behavior will be referred to participate in the ART program through teachers, counselors and/or principal staff members. Referrals could be made by parents, or other school employees. Program referrals will also be facilitated through the Racine County Human Services Department (RCHSD) delinquency division.

### Program Activities:

Featured program activities are designed to assist at-risk youth establish a stronger sense of self-worth, improve relationships with parents/peers, address drug and alcohol use and abuse where necessary, and ultimately, to redirect student focus to address academic deficiencies. Why Gangs LLC Liaison Workers will promote positive outcomes through serving as role models; providing emotional support, positive feedback, peer mediation, conflict resolution skills, serving as life coaches.

Why Gangs LLC liaison program facilitators will serve as mentors, functioning both role models and advocates for program participants during the 10-week ART program. Participating youth would be matched with Why Gangs liaison workers based on their individual needs and interests. Why Gangs liaison workers will become engaged in a variety of activities with program participants, with the focus including, but not limited to, recreational activities, special school projects, social skills and peer relationship building, personal care/hygiene/exercise, and other program services as dictated by the needs of the participant. During the 10-week training program, Why Gangs liaison workers will provide direction, consultation, and support. The time commitment will vary depending upon the individual needs of each participant.

Under the intervention strategy, Why Gangs liaison workers will provide services within the RUSD school system, as well as Racine Police Department COP houses. Program services will be provided 5-days per week during the 10-week initiative.

### Responsibilities - Why Gangs LLC Liaison Staff:

Why Gangs liaison staff members will work with adolescent program participants, establishing realistic goals while building trust and character. Where practical, Why Gangs personnel will allow for program participants to have a voice in selecting activities.

The ART curriculum is unique in that, as a primary component of this discipline, program participants are confronted and required to accept responsibility and accountability for the individual choices that lead to negative outcomes. Participants are provided with specific training designed to promote and facilitate positive decision-making skills. Rewards and incentives are incorporated into the program through business and community donations to the Racine Police Department truancy abatement initiative.

### Recreational Programs:

Why Gangs LLC liaison staff members will schedule trips with participating youth where practical. Each week, liaison workers will facilitate activities with participating youth, including supervised recreational community center-based activities. External services will be facilitated through the Dr. John Bryant Center, George Bray Neighborhood Center, Dr. Martin Luther King Center, and other locations as identified by program participants.

Program participants are evaluated on the following:

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Class participation
- Homework assignments

Home visitation and family counseling sessions are scheduled as needed.

### Personal and Interpersonal Development:

Success in meeting Why Gangs comprehensive intervention objectives is achieved through:

- Ongoing evaluation
- Aggression intervention and youth activities
- Program involvement/participation
- Participant feedback

### Collaboration with Law Enforcement and Community Partners:

The Racine Unified School District (RUSD) was instrumental in informing Why Gangs LLC about the need for the Aggression Replacement program and will refer youth to participate. Why Gangs LLC, has also agreed to offer programming in their Middle/High schools as a pilot the program.

Why Gangs LLC liaison workers have gained valuable knowledge of program component needs from various educational and correctional institutions, and through extensive and thorough communication with the following: Mayor John Dickert, Chief of Police Art Howell; Former Chief Kurt Walhen; Racine Unified School District Superintendent; Dr. Ann Laing, Racine County Human Service Department manager Jonathan Delagrave.

### Justification for Special OJA Funding Request:

Similar to many cities across the nation, the City of Racine faces great fiscal challenges due to a number of factors, the most notable of which being national, state and local concerns involving the federal deficit. State of Wisconsin elected officials have responded to the current fiscal crisis through taking an aggressive approach to deficit reduction via imposing significant reductions in state shared revenue. In the 2004, shared revenue was reduced by \$90 million. Under the adopted 2003-2005 budget, the proposal to limit municipal provisions on the ability to adjust levy limits was vetoed, thus allowing local governments to compensate for the loss of shared revenue through raising property taxes. In vetoing levy limits under the 2003-2005 budget, the sitting Governor justified this decision by citing that "levy limits restrict economic development, limit local government access to capital markets, endanger public health and safety, hinder educational attainment and job training, and foster inequities among local governments."

Reductions in state shared revenue continued in 2010 with a \$30 million loss to Wisconsin residents. Overall, from 2003 through 2012, shared revenue in Wisconsin was reduced from \$981.6 million to \$829.8 million, a reduction of 15 percent (Source: Wisconsin budget project). Unfortunately, the loss of shared revenue has had an unbalanced and disproportionate impact on municipalities throughout the state. Larger cities such as Milwaukee and Green Bay have also been adversely impacted by cuts in shared revenue, however, through the benefit direct access to tax income from professional sports teams, large corporations, and other revenue streams common to larger cities, the net impact on these communities is disproportionate as compared to the impact to Racine area residents.

Unlike surrounding communities such as Kenosha, Mount Pleasant, Pleasant Prairie, Oak Creek and other areas, the City of Racine is geographically landlocked, with no land available for new development (Source: Greater Milwaukee Business Journal). As a result, city leaders in Racine are aggressively

working to generate new revenue streams through “redevelopment” initiatives, utilizing abandoned manufacturing plants to encourage economic growth. The comprehensive and robust redevelopment and community revitalization plan underway in Racine is innovative and promising; however, net revenue from this plan is not anticipated for several years as new business take root in our community.

While current redevelopment initiatives are positive and promising, strict levy limits imposed under Act 32 of the 2011-2013 budget in Wisconsin has severely limited the power of local elected officials to raise property taxes to compensate for the shortfall caused by the loss of shared revenue.

When considering the stated goals and objectives of the Byrne Innovation Criminal Justice Program, the consortium of cross-sector partners in Racine are well-positioned and collectively motivated to connect local evidence-based strategies to address crime, prison recidivism, and neighborhood revitalization. Led by the nationally recognized community policing infrastructure, the network of evidence-based programming in Racine is well-positioned to achieve the stated program goals. Unfortunately, the fiscal climate in the State of Wisconsin in general, and greater budget challenges at the local level in Racine are such that, funding for innovative capacity-building initiatives such as those outlined under the Byrne grant cannot be supported through the local budget process.

