Gangs & Public Safety
I. Defining Gangs

II. Gang Prevalence

III. Programs & Statewide Implementation
Defining Gangs
What is a “gang”?

- 35 states refer to a gang as an “organization, association, or group”
- 33 states require three or more individuals that commit crime together
- 26 states include a common name, identifying sign, or symbol as identifiers of gangs in their definitions.
Gang Prevalence
Myths Regarding Gang Prevalence

- Two key myths regarding prevalence of large national gangs:
  1. Gang migration across the US in the 1980s
  2. MS-13 is well-organized

Prevalence of Gang Violence in America

Spatial Distribution of Trajectory Analysis for Gang-Related Homicide in Large Cities (1996-2009)

Trajectory Model: Percentage of Gang-Related Homicides, Populations Greater Than 100,000

Cities with Population Greater Than 100,000 (N = 248)

Trajectory Group 5
Trajectory Group 4
Trajectory Group 3
Trajectory Group 2
Trajectory Group 1
US_County

Howell & Griffiths, 2019, p. 221
Programs & Statewide Implementation
Potential Statewide Approaches & Programs

• Approaches
  • Comprehensive Gang Program
  • Group Violence Intervention
  • Cure Violence

• Programs
  • Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)
A Comprehensive Gang Program Model

Administrative Structure

Steering Committee

- Research Partner
- Project Coordinator
- Lead Agency

Target Population

- Prevention Strategies
- Intervention Team With Street Outreach
- Suppression Strategies

National Gang Center: https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/
Comprehensive State-wide Program: Massachusetts

• Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI)
  • Administered by Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

• Applies the five core strategies of gang control provided in the Comprehensive Gang Model
  1. Social Intervention
  2. Suppression
  3. Opportunity Provision
  4. Organizational Change
  5. Community Mobilization