



YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN SANTA MONICA: AN ACTION PLAN FOR 2010/2011 (September 2010)

VISION

Santa Monica is a community of supportive and caring adults and families that provide our youth with a sense of belonging and equal access to opportunities that nurture them as they grow and develop into contributing members of society.

Through collaboration and cooperation, the City of Santa Monica, education and non-profit agencies, governmental partners, business, and faith communities will strive to keep our youth safe and secure from violence. As a community of service providers and care givers, we will build the framework to leverage our combined resources and ensure positive outcomes for our youth. We will work with our neighboring communities and partners to form collaborations that address the regional nature of youth violence and promote the social, educational, and healthy development of youth in Santa Monica.

CORE VALUES

Violence, including gang violence and domestic violence, is not an intractable social problem or an inevitable part of the human condition. Individuals are affected by their environments in general and their families, schools, neighborhoods in particular. Human beings will thrive in environments where they feel safe, connected, healthy, and validated.

Santa Monica has many excellent resources and programs for youth of all ages and their families. The following core values guide our efforts.

- Everyone has a role in promoting positive outcomes for Santa Monica's youth from birth to adulthood.
- Together the City, law enforcement, schools, social service agencies and community members will contribute to building support for our young people.
- Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District and Santa Monica College are integral partners in our success.
- Community members, including youth, will provide a voice in planning, implementation, and evaluation and are critical for success and sustainability.
- We will build on what works.
- Programs must have clear goals and be developmentally appropriate.
- Through staff training and mentoring as well as collecting and analyzing data we will continuously improve our outcomes.

- Programs cultivate a staff that youth can identify with in terms of race, gender, culture; offer activities that affirm cultural and ethnic heritage; and provide opportunities for interaction between youth of varying with different cultural and ethnic identities.
- Our coordinated efforts will be characterized by transparency and accountability.
- Increasing positive outcomes for youth of all ages will require a lifelong commitment to continuously ensure that all youth and their families are thriving in Santa Monica.

ACTION STEPS

Project Area	Ongoing Efforts/Next Steps
Prevention	
Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain support of developmental and mental health assessments and interventions for infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are potentially at-risk for serious problems so as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ increase understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on school success and ○ link and bridge systems and services on behalf of young children, their families and programs.
Afterschool activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a range of afterschool activities, both structured and unstructured, across the city for young people from elementary school through high school that provide safe, social gathering places. • Promote the City’s Financial Assistance program so that all youth have access to City sponsored classes and programs.
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve coordination from elementary school through high school to ensure smooth transitions and readiness from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school and high school to community. • Continue law enforcement outreach in the schools and community through trainings, workshops, presentations, youth programs, and on site presence. • Provide comprehensive school based mental health services that range from health promotion and universal prevention strategies in classrooms to intervention services.
Parent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for parent involvement and leadership in areas that affect the safety and positive growth of their children. • Strengthen parent outreach strategies to include established parent groups and organizations.

Youth Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer annual Job Workshop/Career Fair for high school students in collaboration with the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, SMMUSD, SMC, and the City. • Work with community partners on summer jobs and internships for Santa Monica youth. • Develop structure for and implement a program for local hiring of Santa Monica youth and adults.
Intervention	
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer city operated and community based programs that support at-risk youth of all ages with mentoring by positive adults, enriching experiences, and opportunities. • Expand the Trades Interns Program through grant funding. • Fund agencies that provide support to at-risk youth and their families including encouraging continued collaboration for effective case management services.
Los Angeles County Youth Offender Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay involved with LA County's efforts to develop a regional re-entry plan for youth offenders. • Work with LA County Probation to identify Santa Monica youth currently incarcerated and develop evidence based re-entry strategies.
Structural and Systems Recommendations	
Youth Resource Team (YRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen and reconfigure the YRT Policy Group to become the mechanism to monitor and evaluate this plan including addressing youth priorities, assessing current programs, establishing timelines and benchmarks for measuring success, and review strategies moving forward.
Analysis of Data and Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review data trends related to youth violence. • Use data to identify and target services to specific needs and gaps. • Consider the use of data to secure additional funding and resources needed for programming.
Create clear goals and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create clear goals and systems to ensure the integration of outcomes across programs, including after school and school based mental health programs, for ongoing program planning, improvement, and evaluation.
School Based Mental Health Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the leadership of SMMUSD, continue to build collaborative relationships among service providers. • Strengthen coordination and integration of services for youth and their families including coordinated case management efforts.
Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review strategies for ongoing systems of feedback and evaluation. • Review data collection and performance measures. • Develop improved mechanisms for joint planning, program development, and evaluation between SMMUSD, SMC, and the City.
Community Engagement	
Youth Dialogue/Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster the development of the collaborative youth leadership group throughout the city. • Enhance the support of the Human Relations Council Community Dialogues through programs such as Kids with Cameras.
Male Violence Prevention Initiative (Jackson Katz) to Address Community Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the internationally regarded researcher on developing violence prevention strategies for Santa Monica with community stakeholders. • Work with community leaders to identify next steps in violence including a community "campaign" – engaging schools, sports groups, religious groups, and neighborhood groups.

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare periodic written and oral reports to the City Council, School Board, College Trustees, and the community including outlining the purpose and work plan of the YRT Policy Group, youth employment opportunities, and other youth prevention and intervention programs. • Improve use of communication tools such as websites, Facebook, and e-mail blasts to share our program information as well as receive feedback from residents.
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RESOURCES

- Denver’s Youth Agenda, Advancing the Mayor’s Action Challenge, January 2010
- Putting It All Together: Guiding Principles for Quality After-School Programs Serving Preteens, Public/Private Ventures, April 2008
- Santa Monica Early Childhood Initiative Plan, August 2001
- Strategic Action Framework for Empowered & Thriving Youth, Community Action Partnership, Oxnard, 2008
- The State of City Leadership for Children and Families, NLC Institute for Youth Education, & Families 2009
- Youth Violence Reduction Strategy: Goals and Guiding Principles, State of New York, March 2004

REFERENCES

- Community Development Service Provider Guide, 2009-10
- Community Voices Final Report, 2006
- Critical Elements of Quality After-School Programs: A Review of Best Practices, City of Santa Monica, December 2008
- Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Ending Youth Violence (“White Paper”), January 2010
- Evaluation of School-Based Mental Health and Support Services by WestED for City of Santa Monica, August 2006
- Gang Violence Action Partner Update, Information Item, April 2008
- RAND Report – City of Santa Monica Community Profile, January 2003
- Increasing Youth Employment Opportunities in Santa Monica, January 2008