

# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

This assessment was prepared to evaluate the level of criminal gang activity in Durham, with the purpose of further development and implementation the Comprehensive Gang Model that was adopted by Durham in 2007.

Gaps in information/data about gangs have affected Durham's ability to understand and significantly impact local gang activity. These gaps are often bridged with anecdotal information, hearsay or reports in the media, many of which do not portray an accurate picture.

Assessment of Durham's criminal gang activity involves a careful study of several domains, including community demographics, law enforcement, schools, and available resources in Durham to address gang activity.

Multiple types of data analysis (quantitative and qualitative) and multiple data sources (Census, law enforcement, schools, service providers, youth, community) were required for this assessment. The analysis and findings will greatly benefit the Gang Reduction Strategy Steering Committee as they craft policies to:

- Address the root causes that compel youth to join gangs
- Promote positive youth development
- Provide avenues for gang-involved youth to quit gangs
- Respond to gang violence when it occurs with a balanced and unified approach
- Improve cooperation between law enforcement and the community
- Increase collaboration, coordination and information sharing between components
- Ensure that multidisciplinary partnerships are maintained within the Steering Committee
- Elevate youth and gang violence as an issue of community significance

## Assessment Background

A comprehensive assessment of gangs in Durham was first undertaken in 2007 with funding from the Durham Police Department (DPD) and the Durham County Sheriff's Office (DCSO). As a result of that Comprehensive Gang Assessment, Durham adapted the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model.<sup>1</sup> The Model

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<sup>1</sup> Information on Durham's adherence to the Comprehensive Gang Model can be found in the Appendix: Adherence to the Comprehensive Gang Model - February 2013 Report

holds that a neighborhood’s level of social disorganization and lack of opportunities contribute to its youth gang problem. In response, the Model incorporates a mix of five strategies: 1) organizational change and development, 2) community mobilization, 3) social intervention, 4) opportunity provision and 5) suppression.

As part of the Model, a Gang Reduction Strategy Steering Committee (GRS-SC) was formed. The GRS-SC is comprised of top leaders from the City, the County, Durham Public Schools, the judicial system, law enforcement, El Centro Hispano, Duke University, North Carolina Central University, the faith community and others. This group has met continually on a bi-monthly basis since its inception to guide Durham’s efforts aimed at reducing gang activity in the community.<sup>2</sup>

In 2008 Raleigh/Durham was awarded \$2.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Justice through the NC Governor’s Crime Commission for the Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative (CAGI). Raleigh and Durham evenly split the 3-year grant funding. Durham City/County funding (\$1.25 M) was distributed as follows:

Anti-Gang Program Administrator	\$235,625
Law Enforcement (City)	\$385,750
Prevention/Intervention (City)	\$385,750
Re-Entry (County)	\$192,875
Researcher (NC Central)	\$50,000

The Evaluation Report of the CAGI grant noted that one of the major objectives of the Law Enforcement component was to reduce the number of violent gun crimes in the Bull’s Eye area<sup>3</sup>, and significant reductions were realized in the target area during the implementation phase of the grant. Community-based organizations had the opportunity to seek funding to provide prevention/intervention activities within the Bull’s Eye area. Five agencies were funded during the course of the grant, and the Evaluation Report quantified the number of youth and families served.

Given that suppression activities were most likely to have immediate impact and short-term effects on outcomes, including the reduction of serious violent crime, the Evaluation Report indicated the most substantial positive outcomes from the CAGI grant were in the suppression/law enforcement realm.

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<sup>2</sup> Information on the activities of the GRS Steering Committee since its inception can be found in the Appendix: Timetable of Durham’s Gang Reduction Strategy

<sup>3</sup> The “Bull’s Eye area” is a two square-mile area in northeast central Durham, defined by the Durham Police Department in 2006 based on the number of shots fired and reported gun crime. At that time, the Bulls Eye area, although only 2% of the city’s area, it accounted for 20% of violent gun crime, shots fired, prostitution and drug traffic.

No Federal or State funding has been provided to Durham specifically for gang reduction since the expiration of the CAGI grant in 2011. The lack of outside funding has not brought Durham's anti-gang efforts to a halt. Rather, each agency represented on the Steering Committee has worked diligently within their own confines to support the overall effort and to craft policy and procedures conducive to reducing the impact of gangs in Durham. The Steering Committee continues to meet on a regular basis to coordinate these efforts between agencies, to review data and to seek additional resources.

### **Risk Factors for Gang Membership**

Risk factors are the individual or environmental conditions that can predict the likelihood of gang involvement. In general, risk factors for gang involvement mirror risk factors for general forms of delinquency and violence. Youth with elevated risk for joining gangs tend to have more risk factors than youth at risk for general delinquency. If conditions in the environment and the child can be identified early during childhood and adolescence, early prevention and intervention programs can be implemented to reduce these risk factors.

Risk factors are often grouped into five developmental domains: family, individual, school, peers, and community. It is the intent of the Gang Reduction Strategy Steering Committee to address each of these risk factors through various community partnerships. Evidence-based intervention services are available for youth who become court-involved, and suppression efforts are in place to ensure the safety of the community.

# KEY FINDINGS

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## Community Demographics

Detailed information on Durham City/County demographics can be found in the **Community Description** section of the Updated Gang Assessment.

1. The population of Durham City/County has grown approximately 19% over the past ten years.
2. Durham is one of several cities in the U.S. with almost equal numbers of African American and Caucasian residents. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents (14%) has nearly doubled since 2000.
3. The percentage of persons living below the poverty level is 18.6% in the city and 17.1% county-wide.
4. Nine census tracts were identified where residents experience multiple risk factors for gang involvement including poverty, low educational attainment, single-parent households, high rates of violent crime and unemployment.

## Law Enforcement

Detailed law enforcement data can be found in the **Law Enforcement** section of the Updated Gang Assessment.

1. Validated gang members were listed as suspects or victims in 4.6% of all Record Management System (RMS) incident reports from 2009 to 2012.
2. Property crimes where a validated gang member was listed as a suspect or victim dropped 32% between 2009 and 2012.
3. Violent crimes where a validated gang member was listed as a suspect or victim increased 11.2% between 2009 and 2012.
4. Weapons crimes where a validated gang member was listed as a suspect or victim have remained mostly constant between 2009 and 2012.
5. Drug crimes with a validated gang member listed as the suspect fell 6.7% between 2009 and 2012.
6. Aggravated assaults, with the use of a firearm and involving multiple victims, accounted for 30% of total aggravated assaults between 2011 and 2013.
7. Firearms were used in 67% of aggravated assault and 76% of robbery incidents between

- 2009 and 2012 where a validated gang member was listed as either a suspect or victim.
8. The age of gang involved subjects (all crimes) begins to increase exponentially at the age of 16 and declines swiftly after the age of 25.
  9. Juveniles were involved in 6.8% of gang related incidents between 2009 and 2012.
  10. Approximately 160 Inmates released to Durham County in the past 2 years have Security Threat Group designation.
  11. There are inherent problems with the use of NC GangNet for identifying and tracking gang members in Durham.
  12. Gang enhancements can be incorporated into prosecution of crimes with a gang element, but these enhancements have not yet been used in Durham.

## Durham Public Schools

Detailed data on Durham Public Schools can be found in the ***Durham Public Schools*** section of the Updated Gang Assessment.

1. Durham Public School (DPS) enrollment does not reflect demographic realities of school age children in Durham. White families in particular appear to utilize charter schools and private schools at a higher rate than Black or Hispanic/Latino families.
2. Many DPS students have a disproportionate number of risk factors associated with gang involvement, such as living below the poverty level or living in a single parent household.
3. DPS graduation rates have increased over the past three years, however they lag behind the state rate and the rates of similar counties. Graduation rates at the DPS high schools vary widely.
4. Two DPS middle schools and five DPS high schools rank in the bottom 10% of statewide attendance ratings. Truancy remains an issue district-wide.
5. School resource officers (SRO's) are placed in middle schools and high schools to maintain a safe and secure environment; however, their presence appears to increase the number of arrests and court referrals for minor misconduct. During fiscal year 2012-13, SRO referrals accounted for 29% of all juvenile court referrals.
6. The most recent CDC Youth Risk Behavior survey indicates that 58% of DPS high school respondents strongly agree or agree that gang activity is a problem at their school.
7. DPS has more reportable acts per 1,000 students than school districts in comparison counties.
8. The two most common reportable incidents at DPS are possession of a weapon and possession of a controlled substance.
9. There is a wide disparity among DPS schools in the ratio of reportable acts and short term

or long term suspensions.

10. A class action lawsuit was filed against the district in 2006. The lawsuit contended that students' civil rights were violated by targeting black and Hispanic students for serious offenses and adopting a discriminatory gang policy that allowed principals and school resource officers to label students as gang members without proof. The lawsuit was settled in 2011, and as a result revisions were made to the existing policy that included students to receive warnings and interventions for a violation prior to a student being suspended for a first offense.

## Available Resources

Detailed data on available resources can be found in the **Available Resources** section of the Updated Gang Assessment.

1. A number of service organizations operate in Durham to address risks that lead to gang involvement, yet many of these programs have not been assessed for results
2. Effective collaboration between youth serving organizations is needed to reduce duplication of effort.
3. Research-based programs that are fiscally stable and have strong connections to the Durham at-risk community produce the best results.
4. Project BUILD is the lead agency that works with potential and active gang members. Project BUILD utilizes outreach workers and a multidisciplinary intervention team.
5. The Durham County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) is a reliable distributor of state funding and local in-kind matches due to its implementation of the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP).
6. When asked about gaps in programs and strategies, service providers most frequently mentioned job training, early intervention programs, monitoring/services for ex-offenders and school programs to increase academic success.

## Community Perceptions

Detailed information on community perceptions can be found in the *Community Perceptions* section of the Updated Gang Assessment.

1. According to the City of Durham's 2013 Resident Survey, 78% of Durham residents think gangs are a problem, while 17% of residents think they are not.
2. According to the City of Durham's 2013 Resident Survey, 66% of Durham residents who believe gangs are a problem base that belief on media reports, while 31% base it on personal experience/knowledge.

# Recommendations – *Updated*

## *10/8/2014*

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The following recommendations have been developed, based on information gathered in the Updated Gang Assessment.

*“Without data, we’re just another group of people with opinions”*

### Law Enforcement

#	Recommendation	Indicator(s)
1.1	Reduce number of aggravated assaults with firearms involving multiple victims via enforcement efforts, political means, court support and community education.	-% of all aggravated assault victims where there were multiple victims and where a firearm was used [baseline = 30%] (2011-13 average) <b>August 2014 update – 233/588 multiple victim firearm incidents January-June 2014, standing at 40% for the year so far</b>
1.2	Seize more guns per year than the 5-year average.	-# of guns seized per year [baseline = 591] (5-year average provided by DPD) <b>August 2014 update – 279 seized in first half of the year (projects out to 558 for the year, a bit below the baseline)</b>  -# of weapons crimes/year with validated gang member as suspect or victim [baseline = 64/year] (2010-12 avg.)
1.3	Reduce juvenile involvement in gang crime and violent crime by engaging court-involved youth in evidence-based programming.	-# of gang-involved incidents/year where a juvenile is listed as a suspect or victim [baseline = 75/year] (2010-12 avg.)



		-violent (Class A-E) complaint rate/year against Durham County juvenile population ages 10-17 per 1,000 [baseline = 1.53/year/1,000] (2010-12 avg.)
1.4	Track the <del>number</del> <b>percentage</b> of Security Threat Group (STG) offenders returning to Durham County who re-offend within two years	- % of STG offenders who re-offend within two years of returning to Durham <b>[baseline = 79%] (data from 2012 releases)</b>
1.5	Law enforcement will work with the new Misdemeanor Diversion Program (MDP) to reduce first-time arrests for misdemeanors of 16 and 17 year olds	-# of youth <del>participating in</del> <b>completing</b> the Misdemeanor Diversion Program per <b>calendar</b> year [baseline = none, this is a new initiative] <b>October 2014 Update – there have been 30 completions in the first 6 months of the program (April – September 2014)</b>
1.6	GRS Suppression Team meetings to coordinate efforts between law enforcement, Parole/Probation, and the District Attorney’s office shall be conducted on a regular basis.	-# of Suppression Team meetings held per calendar year [baseline = 5] (average # of meetings/year in 2012 and 2013)

**Durham Public Schools**

#	Recommendation	Indicator(s)
2.1	Accurately quantify chronic truancy, then continue and expand strategies to aggressively reduce it where rates are highest	-# of certified “ten-day letters” sent by district principals to parents of elementary, middle and high schools students [baseline = 1,818] (total 10-day letters sent by DPS in SY 2012-13) <b>current reporting issues</b>  -DPS statewide attendance ranking (from 1 to 115, 1 being the best) [baseline = 75] (SY 2012-13 ranking)  <b>(NEW)-% of Truancy Court students who show overall improvement in attendance [baseline = 55%] (average of 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years)</b>

		(NEW)-% of Truancy Court students who are connected to services [baseline = 39%] (average of 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years)
2.2	Continue and expand strategies to continually reduce the DPS dropout rate each year	-North Carolina Consolidated Data Report for DPS dropout rate [baseline = 3.21] (SY 2012-13)  -4-year graduation rates for DPS [baseline = 79.6%] (SY 2012-13, DPS data) <b>August 2014 update – the published rate for SY 2013-14 is 81.5%</b>
2.3	Continue and expand work within the schools and the community to develop alternatives to short-term/long-term suspension and create effective in-school suspension programs	-NCDPI reported rates for DPS short-term suspensions [baseline = 28.85/100 students] (SY 2012-13 rate)  -# of NC Consolidated Report reported long-term DPS suspensions per school year [baseline = 58] (2011-12 to 2012-13 average)
2.4	Examine reasons for, and implement strategies to reduce the two most reportable acts in Durham high schools - 1) possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law, 2) possession of a weapon excluding firearms and powerful explosives	-NCDPI reportable act rate per 1,000 DPS students grades 9-13 [baseline = 18.66/1,000] (SY 2012-13)  -# of juvenile court referrals that are School Resource Officer referred per fiscal year [baseline = 266] (FY 2012-13 data)
2.5	Reduce percentage of DPS high school students who agree or strongly agree that gang activity is a problem at their school	-Centers for Disease Control bi-annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey [baseline = 58%] (CDC-YRBS 2011 data)
2.6	Integrate Student Support Services in schools that address mental and behavioral health needs	-Number of School Psychologists employed full-time by DPS [baseline = 29] (Full-time SY 2013-14) <b>October 2014 update – there are 32 FT employed by DPS in SY 2014-15</b>

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**Service Provision**

#	Recommendation	Indicator(s)
3.1	Support development of evidence-based program evaluation that shall be a central element for resource allocation decisions. Funded programs shall collect data and develop longitudinal assessments	-% of JCPC-funded programs that are evidence-based [baseline = 100%] (JCPC 2013-14 Annual Plan) <b>October 2014 update – 100% of 2014-15 funded programs are evidenced-based according to the 2014-15 JCPC Annual Plan</b>
3.2	Assessment of local government-funded programs shall include consideration of the number and type of participants served and level of collaboration with other programs	-ratio of cost/client participating in the local government-funded JCPC program [baseline = \$304/participant] (JCPC 2013-14 Annual Plan data, \$220,990 local funds and 726 participants) <b>October 2014 update: JCPC Annual Plan for 2014-15 shows \$317,113 in local funds serving estimated 680 youth for ratio of \$466/participant</b>
3.3	Increase coordination between agencies serving high-risk youth	-# of GRS Prevention/Intervention Team coordination meetings held per <b>calendar</b> year [baseline = 5/year] (average meetings/year in 2012 and 2013)
3.4	Durham County will continue to implement coordinated gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies, utilizing the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model.	- Adherence to the Model Fidelity Checklist as developed by the National Gang Center [baseline = Durham implemented the six key elements of the Model Fidelity Checklist in FY 2013-14] (February 13, 2013 Model Fidelity Report to the GRS Steering Committee) <b>Updated report on Model Fidelity will be presented to the Steering Committee in February 2015</b>