



# OJJDP

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## JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

# The Comprehensive Strategy: Lessons Learned From the Pilot Sites

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In the late 1980's and early 1990's, the United States witnessed an alarming rise in juvenile crime and delinquency. Between 1987 and 1994, arrests of juveniles for violent crimes increased 70 percent (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1997). In 1993, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) published its *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* to provide communities with a strategic yet practical response to juvenile delinquency and to help prevent juveniles from becoming serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders (Wilson and Howell, 1993). The Comprehensive Strategy provides a research-based framework of strategic responses—from early prevention to a range of appropriate and graduated sanctions—to support States and local jurisdictions in their efforts to reduce juvenile crime and delinquency. After developing and testing both the prevention and graduated sanctions components of the Comprehensive Strategy, OJJDP launched a national training and technical assistance initiative in 1995 with the publication of its *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (the *Guide*) (Howell, 1995).

In 1996, three communities—Lee and Duval Counties, FL, and San Diego County, CA—collaborated with OJJDP to apply the

processes and principles set forth in the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*. This Bulletin describes the experiences of and lessons learned by these Comprehensive Strategy pilot sites. Through their commitment to improving juvenile services and the lives of youth and their families, these three communities have made substantial progress toward planning and implementing targeted and cost-effective ways to promote healthy youth development and arrest the development of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offending. They also have demonstrated how a comprehensive strategic approach to preventing and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency can be planned and implemented. The sections that follow provide an overview of the Comprehensive Strategy and describe the Comprehensive Strategy planning processes and key lessons learned by each pilot site.

## Overview of the Comprehensive Strategy

The Comprehensive Strategy incorporates two principal components:

- ◆ Preventing youth from becoming delinquent through prevention strategies for all youth with a focus on those at greatest risk.

## A Message From OJJDP

If we are to continue the recent downturn in the rates of juvenile crime and violence that had been rising at a disturbing pace in the late 1980's and early 1990's, we need to implement a broad-based response that effectively addresses the diverse, multiple causes of delinquency.

Derived from extensive research, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Comprehensive Strategy was developed to assist States and local communities in preventing at-risk youth from becoming serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders and in crafting an appropriate response to those who do.

After publishing its *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* in 1993, OJJDP tested and refined its prevention and graduated sanctions components over several years. In 1996, the Office assisted three communities (Duval and Lee Counties, FL, and San Diego County, CA) in applying its principles locally.

This Bulletin offers an overview of the Comprehensive Strategy, describes its implementation in the three pilot sites, and discusses the lessons learned in that process. It is our hope that this information will help you to address juvenile crime and violence in your own community.

- ◆ Improving the juvenile justice system response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives that include immediate intervention, intermediate sanctions, community-based corrections, and aftercare services.

The Comprehensive Strategy incorporates the philosophy of balanced and restorative justice by employing restitution, community service, and other restorative justice programs when appropriate (Howell, 1995). This multidisciplinary, research-based framework is guided by the following six principles for preventing and reducing high-risk behaviors:

- ◆ Strengthening the family in its primary responsibility to instill moral values and provide guidance and support to children.
- ◆ Supporting core social institutions (schools, churches, youth service organizations, community organizations) in their roles to develop capable, mature, and responsible youth.
- ◆ Promoting delinquency prevention as the most cost-effective approach to reducing juvenile delinquency.
- ◆ Intervening immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior first occurs to prevent delinquent offenders from becoming chronic offenders or from progressively committing more serious and violent crimes.
- ◆ Establishing a system of graduated sanctions that holds each juvenile offender accountable, protects public safety, and provides programs and services that meet identified treatment needs.
- ◆ Identifying and controlling the small percent of serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders who commit the majority of juvenile felony-level offenses.

### Continuum of Services and Strategies

An effective continuum of services in a community offers a range of programs and services that provide the “right resources for the right kid at the right time.” The services meet the dual objectives of promoting the healthy development of children and youth and ensuring the safety of the community.

## Overview of the Comprehensive Strategy

*Problem Behavior* > *Noncriminal Misbehavior* > *Delinquency* > *Serious, Violent, and Chronic Offending*

### Prevention

*Target Population: At-Risk Youth*

Programs for All Youth > Programs for Youth at Greatest Risk > Immediate Intervention > Intermediate Sanctions > Community Confinement > Training Schools > Aftercare

#### Youth Development Goals:

- ◆ Healthy and nurturing families.
- ◆ Safe communities.
- ◆ School attachment.
- ◆ Prosocial peer relations.
- ◆ Personal development and life skills.
- ◆ Healthy lifestyle choices.

### Graduated Sanctions

*Target Population: Delinquent Youth*

#### Youth Habilitation Goals:

- ◆ Healthy family participation.
- ◆ Community reintegration.
- ◆ Educational success and skills development.
- ◆ Healthy peer network development.
- ◆ Prosocial values development.
- ◆ Healthy lifestyle choices.

The primary goal of the Comprehensive Strategy is to create a seamless continuum of juvenile and family services and programs within a community. This “continuum of care” begins by providing research-based prevention services for all youth and ensuring targeted programs for youth at greatest risk. For juvenile offenders, the Comprehensive Strategy provides immediate interventions. In addition, for youth who have committed more serious or repeated delinquent acts, the juvenile justice system needs to incorporate research-based graduated sanctions, like those outlined by the Comprehensive Strategy, that combine accountability and rehabilitation components designed to deter future delinquency and protect the community.

The primary objective of a community’s Comprehensive Strategy process is to unify and enhance existing programs and services and to develop a systematic approach for:

- ◆ Identifying and reaching populations in need of prevention services.
- ◆ Increasing communication and information sharing among all participating agencies and services.
- ◆ Coordinating and strengthening existing effective programs.
- ◆ Instituting new programs to fill identified service gaps in the current prevention and graduated sanctions continuum.
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of the Compre-

hensive Strategy process and its policies, systems, and services.

The process of planning and implementing a comprehensive community strategy involves several interrelated and ongoing steps: mobilizing the community, its key leaders, and other stakeholders and familiarizing them with the goals, principles, and elements of the Comprehensive Strategy process; conducting community assessments (e.g., analysis of risk factors, existing systems, and resources); and conducting a strategic planning process to identify, implement, and coordinate appropriate services and monitor their effectiveness.

### Mobilizing the Community

A key goal of the Comprehensive Strategy is to mobilize all segments of the community—schools, government agencies, law enforcement, courts and corrections, public and private social service agencies, businesses, civic organizations, the faith community, and private citizens—to cooperate in a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the problems and needs of juveniles in their neighborhoods and the community at large. Commitment from community leaders is crucial to the success of a coordinated effort. These individuals must understand and champion the principles and goals of the Comprehensive Strategy and be willing to commit resources to the assessment, planning, and implementation processes.

## Conducting Community Assessments

A risk-focused planning approach to reducing juvenile delinquency is a cornerstone of the Comprehensive Strategy. Both the prevention and graduated sanctions components of the strategy are based on assessing and responding systematically to risk factors—at the community level for prevention efforts and at the individual level for objective decisionmaking about appropriate interventions for system-involved youth. The ultimate goal of the Comprehensive Strategy is a continuum of services, including research-based prevention programs that address risk factors in the community and a system of research-based graduated sanctions that provide a range of dispositional alternatives for youth in the juvenile justice system based on their risk of reoffending and need for treatment.

**Prevention.** Risk- and protection-focused prevention is based on the premise that, to prevent a problem from occurring, the factors contributing to the development of the problem (risk factors) must be identified and addressed. At the same time, factors that insulate or protect children from problems (protective factors) also must be strengthened. Considerable research over the past 30 years has identified a number of risk factors that are associated with juvenile problem behaviors including substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, and violence (Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller, 1992; Yoshikawa, 1994). As illustrated in table 1, these risk factors operate in multiple domains: the community, family, school, and individual/peer group. Examples of risk factors include the exposure to drugs in the community, extreme economic and social deprivation, family conflict, favorable parental and peer attitudes toward problem behaviors, academic failure, lack of commitment to school, and alienation and rebelliousness.

Protective factors either reduce the impact of risk factors or change the way the young person responds to risk. Protective factors are important throughout a child's developmental process. They include certain individual characteristics (e.g., resilient temperament, prosocial orientation), strong bonding and attachment to positive adults and the community, and a solid set of healthy beliefs and clear standards of behavior. Enhancing these protective factors is a goal of both formal and informal prevention

**Table 1: Risk Factors for Health and Behavior Problems**

Risk Factor	Adolescent Problem Behaviors				
	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teenage Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence
<b>Community</b>					
Availability of drugs	✓				
Availability of firearms		✓			✓
Community laws and norms favorable to drug use, firearms, and crime	✓	✓			✓
Media portrayals of violence					✓
Transitions and mobility	✓	✓		✓	
Low neighborhood attachment and community organization	✓	✓			✓
Extreme economic deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Family</b>					
Family history of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Family management problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable parental attitudes toward and involvement in the problem behavior	✓	✓			✓
<b>School</b>					
Early and persistent antisocial behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic failure beginning in elementary school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of commitment to school	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Individual/Peer</b>					
Rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
Friends who engage in the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early initiation of the problem behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constitutional factors	✓	✓			✓

**Source:** Catalano and Hawkins, *Risk Focused Prevention, Using the Social Development Strategy*, Seattle, WA: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. 1995.

programs and services, whether they focus on individuals, schools, families, or communities.

As part of the Comprehensive Strategy process, communities collect and assess data about the nature and extent of their juvenile problems and the levels of their risk

and protective factors. These assessment data help determine the types of prevention strategies needed in the community.

In addition to assessing risk and protective factors, communities also develop an inventory of available resources for preventing or addressing juvenile problems.



The Comprehensive Strategy is not just another program. It is a community-focused, research-based approach to juvenile delinquency that coordinates prevention services with the juvenile justice system's response to criminal behavior.

This process is designed to identify and assess existing prevention, early intervention, and graduated sanctions programs and services in the community and gaps that exist in the community's programs, services, and strategies.

**Graduated sanctions.** The graduated sanctions component of the Comprehensive Strategy is based on the belief that the juvenile justice system can effectively handle delinquent behavior through the judicious application of a range of graduated sanctions and treatment and rehabilitation services. To help determine the most appropriate sanctions for juvenile offenders, communities use a different type of risk assessment. In this case, objective, research-based risk assessment and classification tools focus on the individual youth to assess (1) the seriousness of the delinquent act; (2) the potential risk for reoffending based on the presence of validated predictors (e.g., delinquency history, life circumstances); and (3) the risk to public safety. Decisionmakers at all critical points in the juvenile justice system are guided by this risk assessment process, which is designed to promote consistency, rationality, and equity in the disposition of juvenile cases along a continuum of sanctions options.

A model continuum of sanctions includes the following:

- ◆ Immediate sanctions within the community for first-time, nonviolent offenders.
- ◆ Intermediate sanctions within the community for more serious and repeat offenders.
- ◆ Secure care programs for the most serious, violent, and chronic offenders.
- ◆ Aftercare programs that provide high levels of social control and treatment.

The Comprehensive Strategy assessment process for graduated sanctions involves identifying and evaluating existing risk assessment tools and, as with prevention programs, developing an inventory of community treatment and sanctions resources to identify gaps.

Broadly defined, risk assessment and classification in juvenile justice refer to

the process of estimating an individual's likelihood of continued involvement in delinquent behavior and deciding the most appropriate intervention strategy for the identified risk level. Classification decisions based on risk assessment are made at all levels of the juvenile justice process, including reporting, arrest, intake, detention, prosecution, disposition, and placement. In conjunction with risk assessment, a needs assessment is used to identify individual problem areas to help ensure that youthful offenders receive appropriate program services (i.e., needs assessments inform case planning rather than classification decisions).

### Comprehensive Strategic Planning

After completing the collection and analysis of risk factors, needs, and resource data, a community has a great deal of information with which to develop its own comprehensive strategy for addressing serious, violent, and chronic juvenile delinquency. The initial goals are to identify and systematically address three to five high-priority community risk factors through prevention efforts and to establish a full range of appropriate community-based sanctions for youthful offenders. To meet these goals, the community identifies and works to fill gaps in the systems, processes, resources, services, and programs available to respond to the needs of its youth.

Subsequently, the community examines its capacity to address the identified community risks and to ensure that the right resources are available to each youth (and family) at the right time. This planning process involves developing new programs and enhancing existing services to ensure that they are research based, data driven, and outcome focused and will address risks and promote the positive social development of youth at all points along the prevention-to-sanctions continuum. The process also requires examination of legislative and systems issues that may diminish the effectiveness of a community's response.

A long-term plan is not complete without a process for assessing how well it was implemented and whether it reached its desired outcomes. Implementation of a comprehensive strategy may involve many changes in decisionmaking, resource allocation, service and programmatic goals, case processing, information sharing and use, and other aspects of the human services and juvenile

justice systems. Implicit in the data-driven approach of the Comprehensive Strategy is a framework for ongoing evaluation of whether the desired programmatic and systems changes have occurred and whether they are having the desired effects.

OJJDP is conducting a national process evaluation to better understand the factors associated with successful community planning and implementation efforts. The evaluation will also examine the roles that OJJDP, State, and local leaders can play to facilitate these processes. A national impact evaluation to determine the specific crime-related effects of the Comprehensive Strategy in each community is also planned. In addition, OJJDP provides evaluation technical assistance to communities to conduct their own process and impact evaluations.

### Overview of the Three Comprehensive Strategy Pilot Sites

Since 1996, OJJDP has provided technical assistance support for the development of the Comprehensive Strategy in three pilot sites, Lee and Duval Counties, FL, and San Diego County, CA. Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. (DRP), and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) were selected by OJJDP to provide training and technical assistance (TA) to assist these three local communities in developing a Comprehensive Strategy. The training and TA consisted of a series of training events for members of the communities and designated working groups and tailored TA consultations to support the communities' planning efforts. As the following summaries show, key leaders and practitioners in these communities have dedicated countless hours and shown a strong commitment to the Comprehensive Strategy planning process. Their experiences have taught important lessons and, as a result, new tools have been developed that can help other communities across the country undertake the Comprehensive Strategy planning process.

#### Lee County, Florida

Lee County, located on the southwest side of the Florida peninsula, is the smallest of the three pilot sites, although it is the third fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States. With a population of nearly 404,000 in 1998, the county's population has been increasing at a rate twice that of the State and eight times

that of the United States. Youth under the age of 18 represent nearly 20 percent of the county's population. This rapid growth has led to an increased demand for services, especially law enforcement, human services, and transportation, particularly in the county's four cities: Fort Myers (the county seat), Cape Coral, Fort Myers Beach, and Sanibel.

Shaken by a series of high profile juvenile crimes, including the murder of a tourist and a spree of murders and arson committed by members of a local juvenile cult, Lee County sought to adopt a comprehensive approach addressing these alarming problems. A preliminary meeting took place in early 1996 to provide general information about the Comprehensive Strategy to key community leaders. Participants in the orientation session included representatives from the State Attorney's office, local law enforcement, elected officials, juvenile court, child-serving public agencies, the State Department of Juvenile Justice, and nonprofit youth-serving organizations. The session was designed to familiarize key local leaders with the purposes, principles, and components of the Comprehensive Strategy to obtain their endorsement of the concept and their commitment to devote the resources of their agencies and constituencies to a long-term planning and implementation process.

Following the orientation for key leaders, the first communitywide training session occurred over a 3-day period in November 1996. Led by trainers from DRP and NCCD, participants developed a common vision and goals for Lee County and learned how to conduct the necessary planning assessments. As part of their overall vision to produce Healthy, Ethical, and Productive (HEP) adults, the community leaders developed specific objectives, including a 25-percent reduction in the number of minority youth under age 18 living in poverty by 2005, a 20-percent reduction in domestic violence within 5 years, and an increase in children's reading and math skills.

The participants divided into two working committees—one for delinquency prevention and one for graduated sanctions—based on the principal components of the Comprehensive Strategy. These two groups continued to meet over the next 2 years to assess community risks and resources, determine priority areas, and recommend program and policy changes.

**Prevention committee.** The prevention committee, initially chaired by an assistant

State attorney, was immediately tasked with researching and documenting local risk factors and, ultimately, identifying priority risk areas. After completing a challenging data collection effort, complicated by inconsistent definitions and counting mechanisms for many data elements, the prevention committee identified three priority risk factors for Lee County: friends who engage in the problem behavior, family conflict/family management problems, and extreme social and economic deprivation. Based on these risk factors and the collected data, the committee evaluated prevention resources available to juveniles and their families. Each resource was subsequently cataloged in the Lee County Community Resource Directory (Lee County Juvenile Justice Council and Comprehensive Strategy Task Force, 1998).

**Graduated sanctions committee.** The graduated sanctions committee collected data to develop a profile of juvenile offenders in Lee County. The committee inventoried secure and nonsecure programs for juvenile offenders and evaluated the risk assessment and intake instruments used by the State in juvenile processing. The committee then identified gaps in programs and services for juvenile offenders according to risk factors. Among the recommendations made by the graduated sanctions committee was the creation of a Juvenile Assessment Center to ensure uniform intake procedures and provide better services to juveniles and their families. The committee also identified 12 priority tasks to improve the application and effectiveness of graduated sanctions in Lee County:

- ◆ Analysis of the clerk of the court's database.
- ◆ Validation study of the risk-classification instrument (RCI).
- ◆ Analysis of recidivism for each of Florida's five placement levels.
- ◆ Automated inventory of programs.
- ◆ Manual record search of youth in secure detention to assess appropriateness of placement.
- ◆ Analysis of Lee County youth referred to community-based programs compared with Lee County youth in secure confinement.
- ◆ Study of handling of prerelease youth without aftercare options.
- ◆ Analysis of time between disposition and placement.

- ◆ Study of Notices To Appear.
- ◆ Refinement of initial screening instrument to collect more data on youth and family needs.
- ◆ Design of instrument to replace RCI at intake as needed.
- ◆ Evaluation of program effectiveness.

Early in the Comprehensive Strategy planning process, a Youth Advisory Board was formed to provide a forum for youth to present their perspectives on issues and needs in Lee County. Middle and high school youth are represented on the board and participate in three committees: Communications and Recruitment, Peers Educating Peers (PEP), and Teen Center Development. At Lee County's second Comprehensive Strategy training session, held in April 1997, the board reported its recommendations to the prevention and graduated sanctions committees. The board recommended expanding mentoring opportunities, increasing community involvement in the lives of youth, and providing safe hangouts. The county responded by instituting new and expanded mentoring programs in cooperation with local businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Denny's Corporation, for example, supports staff involvement in mentoring activities and donates goods for special events.

The Florida Department of Children and Families and the Department of Juvenile Justice in Lee County have jointly implemented the Parenting Project for parents of children ages 5–18 with attention deficit disorders and other behavioral problems. Selected to address the "family conflict" priority risk factor, the program provides counseling, parental training, and support networks for 60 parents. Participants are referred by the Department of Children and Families, Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Program; schools; juvenile court; the sheriff's department; mental health service providers; and foster parent training programs. A local mental health facility provides transportation for program participants. The collaborative process on this project has been greatly enhanced through its focus on an identified priority risk factor.

Lee County's efforts to establish a comprehensive Juvenile Assessment Center have been central to its Comprehensive Strategy planning process. Now in its final planning stages, the center will provide booking, receiving, and clinical assessment services for offenders, housing as many as 60 youth in a secure, modern facility. It

also will offer resources for parents and other citizens concerned about youth behavior and developmental problems. The center will include offices for the school board, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Children and Families, with the latter conducting onsite screening and assessments for abused and neglected children. County officials are raising funds for construction of the center through a bond issue passed in 1999 and through annual electric franchise taxes.

Lee County also is working to improve detention placements. The initial graduated sanctions program assessment revealed that juvenile placements tended to be slot-driven rather than needs-driven—that is, youth placements were based on where space was available rather than where needs could best be met. Researchers from the Lee County Sheriff's Office and Florida Gulf Coast University are evaluating placement data and will make recommendations for future placement strategies. In addition, the county is reviewing and validating the State's structured risk assessment instruments and will make recommendations to the State Department of Juvenile Justice for tailoring the instruments to the needs of different localities. The Comprehensive Strategy planning process also led Lee County to streamline its juvenile court system, replacing part-time judges with one full-time juvenile judge who is active in Comprehensive Strategy activities.

The Comprehensive Strategy workgroup members were assisted by collaboration with several existing Lee County initiatives:

- ◆ The Kids Vision and Intervention Program utilizes the faith-based community to intervene in conflict situations through trained mentors and serves as an advocate for youth.
- ◆ The Mentor Center, a collaborative effort of Weed and Seed, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), provides free training for Lee County individuals wishing to mentor a child.
- ◆ The Department of Children and Families developed the Kids 1st Program in an effort to improve Lee County's child welfare system. To accomplish this, the Department works closely with the Lee County School District to establish links between the Department and every school in Lee County. Kids 1st

addresses each of the identified risk factors for Lee County youth in the dependency system.

- ◆ FGCU developed its Juvenile Justice Aftercare Program in cooperation with the Department of Juvenile Justice. This program provides intensive supervision and support services for youth released from confinement, including a highly structured and intensive mentoring component. FGCU provides training to university students who serve as intensive case monitors working under the direction of a Department of Juvenile Justice case manager. The intensive supervision, coupled with mentoring, increases the likelihood of the youth successfully completing the transition back into the community.

Lee County representatives are currently in the process of finalizing their 5-year implementation plan for the Comprehensive Strategy.

### Duval County, Florida

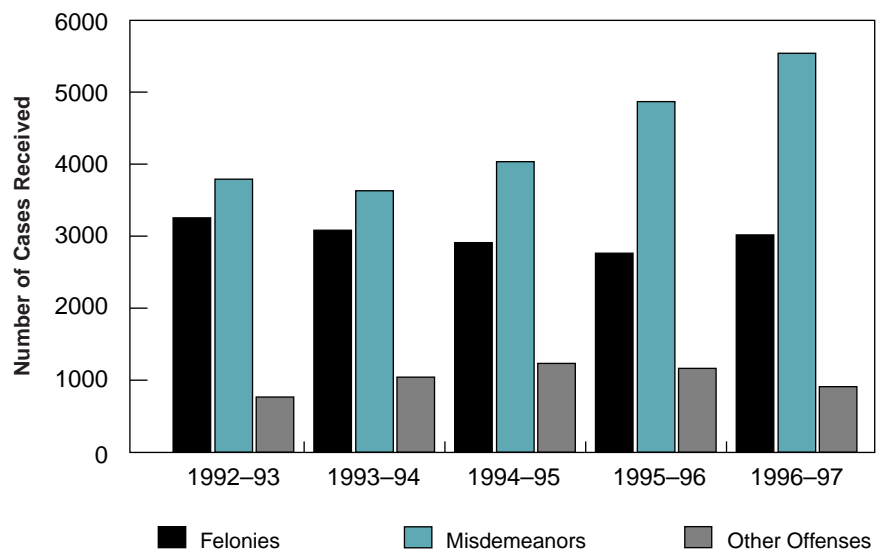
Duval County and the city of Jacksonville, located on Florida's northeast coast, have the second largest youth population in the State. The county and city have a combined population of more than 1.7 million residents, of whom more than 26 percent are under age 18. Duval County and the city of Jacksonville have a long history of collaboration, particularly since they consolidated into a single government struc-

ture in 1967. Three of the area's key elected officials, the State attorney, the sheriff, and the mayor of Jacksonville, work closely together and encourage collaborative, interagency initiatives.

Following a slight decline between 1992 and 1994, the number of delinquency cases in Duval County rose between 5 and 9 percent each subsequent year. This increase was driven primarily by misdemeanor cases, as illustrated in figure 1. Notable among these offenses were misdemeanor assault cases, which nearly doubled, and concealed weapon cases, which nearly tripled between 1993 and 1997. Also contributing to the overall increase in misdemeanor cases were misdemeanor marijuana possession cases, which rose 160 percent, and nonviolent resisting arrest, which more than tripled. In this same period, however, several more serious crimes among juveniles declined. Between 1993 and 1997, rape and sexual assault declined 20 percent, robbery declined 22 percent, and auto theft declined 23 percent.

Among subgroups of offenders, the number of females as a proportion of the total youth offender population increased 7 percent from 1993–1997; African Americans increased 27 percent, and Asian Americans increased 70 percent. The number of white juvenile offenders increased 16 percent during this same period (City of Jacksonville Department of Community Services, 1997).

**Figure 1: Number of Delinquency Cases Received by Category of Most Serious Charge, 1992–97**



Source: City of Jacksonville Department of Community Services, 1997.



In light of this dramatic increase in the rate of minor offending, and reflecting the current knowledge that this type of crime can be a precursor to more serious offending (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998), Duval County made a commitment to enhance its efforts at reducing and preventing juvenile crime. Duval County launched its Comprehensive Strategy initiative in June 1996 with support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, a national private foundation with offices in Jacksonville. The duPont Fund, which has supported the planning processes in both Duval and Lee Counties, convened more than 100 community leaders to learn about and explore the possibility of implementing the Comprehensive Strategy; provided funding, staffing, and facility assistance for Duval County's planning and training activities; and served as a "neutral convener" for Comprehensive Strategy activities and events. Following the introductory meeting, local leaders formed a Community Advocates Board, chaired by a local attorney and a volunteer from the mayor's office, to guide the planning and implementation processes.

In November 1996, a communitywide training session on the Comprehensive Strategy was sponsored by the duPont Fund. This training session focused on needs and tasks specific to Duval County. The trainers addressed data collection, risk and resource assessment, and other elements of the Comprehensive Strategy approach. The training was attended by the cochairs of the Community Advocates Board and other key community leaders, including representatives from the sheriff's office, State attorney's office, public defenders office, Department of Children and Families, State Department of Juvenile Justice, Jacksonville mayor's office, Jacksonville Children's Commission, Jacksonville Human Services Council, school representatives, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, private citizens, and staff of the duPont Fund. Following this 2-day training, participants divided into prevention and graduated sanctions committees to begin the assessment process.

**Prevention committee.** The prevention committee, chaired by a retired local attorney, began its task of collecting and assessing local data to identify and prioritize risk factors. Gathering information initially was a major challenge for members of the committee. However, a concerted collaborative effort between the Jacksonville

Children's Commission, the school system, and numerous nonprofit agencies enabled the committee to collect data and statistical information required to complete the risk assessment process. Based on its analysis of the risk factor data, Duval County identified five priority risk factors: economic deprivation, early academic failure, family management problems, lack of commitment to school, and the availability and use of drugs. For each risk factor, the committee compiled a list of indicators and identified promising approaches for reducing those risks.

**Graduated sanctions committee.** The graduated sanctions committee, chaired by a retired circuit court judge, also collected data on juvenile crime and delinquency. This committee divided into three subcommittees to focus on structured decisionmaking, data collection, and programs. Members of the subcommittees included representatives from law enforcement, judicial, and prosecutorial agencies; the school system and nonprofit agencies; defense attorneys; and staff from the Department of Juvenile Justice. Together, the subcommittees' work presented a picture of arrest and incarceration trends and program and service needs in Duval County. Specifically, the program subcommittee noted service gaps in immediate and intermediate sanctions, secure facilities, and aftercare programs and made recommendations for improvements within each of these categories. For example, after comparing available resources with rising female arrest trends, the subcommittee recommended expanding the number of programs and services for female offenders.

**Comprehensive strategy plan.** Recommendations from both the prevention and graduated sanctions committees were published as part of Duval County's 5-year Comprehensive Strategy strategic action plan. This plan was formally presented to the community and Attorney General Janet Reno at a May 1998 ceremony in Jacksonville.

At the time of the printing of this Bulletin, Duval County's Comprehensive Strategy plan included immediate, short-term, and long-term goals, with the overall goal of reducing juvenile crime by 40 percent by 2015. Implementation of the plan is guided by a steering committee, comprising representatives from local agencies and nonprofit organizations, and by a Comprehensive Strategy Board, cochaired by the mayor, sheriff, and State attorney.

Between May and August 1998, four full-time and one part-time staff were hired with funding from the duPont Fund, the Jacksonville Department of Community Services, and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant to coordinate implementation of Comprehensive Strategy activities. The city of Jacksonville has allocated \$900,000 in Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program funds and an additional \$100,000 in city matching funds for the implementation of Comprehensive Strategy programs. Within the immediate timeframe (6–12 months), the Comprehensive Strategy staff, steering committee, and board adopted an annual implementation plan, now being executed, that awards \$502,000 to 18 nonprofit organizations to enhance existing prevention and sanctions programs that are successful in minimizing Duval County's five priority risk factors and enhancing protective factors. Following are some examples of these programs:

- ◆ **Project Abundant Life** provides youth and their families with afterschool and weekend tutorial services, family enhancement services, job and career training, computer training, GED classes, and a host of summer activities for youth. This program is a service of Abundant Life Community Church, Inc., which offers certified HIV/AIDS testing, counseling, and related services.
- ◆ The nationally recognized **Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program** consists of an intensive 8-week cycle of parental and student involvement with a FAST team of counselors. Program goals include enhancement of family functioning, prevention of the youth's failure in school, prevention of parental and youth substance abuse, and reduction of family conflict and stress.
- ◆ The **Family Visitation Center** provides a safe, supervised environment for abused and neglected youth to visit with their biological parents. The center is a collaborative effort of the Junior League of Jacksonville, the Children's Home Society, and the Department of Children and Families and is a critical component of abuse and violence prevention and intervention. Through the center, families are given the opportunity to rebuild healthy relationships free of violence and abuse.
- ◆ The **Together We Will Program (ZIP code 32209)** was developed by the steering committee after determining that the identified risk factors were most prevalent in ZIP code 32209. The

committee decided to focus funding to support this comprehensive juvenile crime prevention program that addresses directly the five priority risk factors in the predetermined area. Services provided include “Character Counts” components taught by law enforcement personnel, tutoring and mentoring programs, computer skills classes, recreation programs, FAST programs at two locations, family finance counseling, and mental health counseling.

These programs are but a few examples from the beginning stages of Jacksonville’s Comprehensive Strategy implementation.

### San Diego County, California

San Diego County, the sixth largest county in the United States, is the largest of the three pilot sites. The county’s population of more than 2.5 million speaks 80 different languages. From 1994 to 2003, the number of youth ages 10 to 19 in the county is projected to increase 26 percent. Between 1986 and 1996, felony arrests of juveniles rose 22 percent, with violent felony arrests of juvenile females rising 276 percent. From 1988 to 1998, there was a 92-percent increase in the number of juveniles admitted to Juvenile Hall (secure detention) for violent crimes and a 229-percent increase in arrests for weapons charges. Juvenile gang-related violence has also risen dramatically, from 6 homicides in 1987 to 30 in 1993 (Pennell, 1997).

San Diego County’s public agencies and private sector organizations have a history of collaboration in responding to community problems. Government agencies and community-based organizations meet regularly to discuss problems and explore promising approaches and have long embraced a shared vision of prevention as an element of crime control. In fact, the county had begun a comprehensive planning process even before its first official Comprehensive Strategy training event. San Diego County’s Comprehensive Strategy planning events and schedule are presented in table 2, illustrating typical planning steps undertaken by the pilot sites.

In 1996, California’s Senate Bill 1760 (SB 1760) legislation made grant funds available to county governments for developing local action plans to prevent and reduce juvenile crime. With \$62,000 in SB 1760 funds, San Diego County developed a local action plan, completed in March 1997. In 1996, San Diego County had begun working with OJJDP to become one of

the Comprehensive Strategy pilot sites and received its first training for key leaders in October. Because the State’s SB 1760 grant program included many components that paralleled the Comprehensive Strategy, San Diego County quickly combined the two efforts, with the local action plan serving as the framework for its Comprehensive Strategy initiative.

In preparing the local action plan, local leaders and members of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council met monthly to discuss risk and program assessments and community needs. The coordinating council, representing the police, probation office, child welfare, and youth-serving agencies, is chaired by the chief probation officer, whose staff completed much of the planning work in conjunction with staff from the Children’s Initiative, a local non-profit agency. The Children’s Initiative was selected to spearhead the Comprehensive

Strategy initiative, serving as a neutral convener able to “transcend local politics.”

At San Diego County’s first communitywide Comprehensive Strategy training session in December 1996, participants were taught the key elements of the Comprehensive Strategy approach, including community risk and resource assessment, graduated sanctions, and long-range planning. Participants developed a shared vision for the future of children in the community, which was captured in the acronym CLEAR for caring, literate, educated, and responsible children. They also identified potential barriers to the planning and implementation processes and began to identify ways to surmount these obstacles.

Following the first training session, participants divided into prevention and graduated sanctions committees, although they later merged into a single task force with six sub-committees: policymaker “buy-in, stay-in”;

**Table 2: Sample Pilot Site Schedule—Comprehensive Strategy Planning Events in San Diego County, California**

July 1996	◆ State Senate Bill (SB) 1760 enacted to provide \$2 million to California counties to develop local action plans for reducing the rate of juvenile crime and delinquency.
October 1996	◆ Comprehensive Strategy orientation for 50 key leaders from county agencies and organizations.
November 1996	◆ Multiagency Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council created in anticipation of SB 1760 award.
December 1996	◆ Three-day Comprehensive Strategy training for 200 line staff and community members. ◆ Graduated sanctions and prevention task forces created. ◆ San Diego receives \$62,000 grant through SB 1760 to develop local action plan.
January 1997	◆ Prevention and graduated sanctions task forces hold first meetings.
March 1997	◆ San Diego County local action plan completed.
April 1997	◆ Graduated sanctions and prevention task forces combine to create one task force.
May 1997	◆ Board of Corrections awarded San Diego Probation Department \$6.9 million in SB 1760 funds for its Breaking Cycles program.
October 1997	◆ Two-day training on promising approaches for addressing identified service gaps.
April 1998	◆ Full-time Comprehensive Strategy coordinator hired.
June 1998	◆ Comprehensive Strategy Blueprint for Youth, Family, and Community developed.



resource development; information dissemination and advocacy; coordination/merging paradigms (i.e., coordination of streams of resources); information sharing; and community engagement/development-inclusiveness. San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy planners identified five gap areas in which existing programs were judged insufficient to meet community needs: substance abuse treatment, after-school programs, parent training and support, vocational and technical training, and programming for girls. They also identified geographic gaps—the county covers more than 4,260 square miles—in day treatment and supervision programs, drug and alcohol services, and correctional facilities in particular regions. For each priority area, participants identified baseline data, indicators of change, and desired outcomes and a program implementation plan based on promising program approaches.

Following community assessment, San Diego County began addressing gaps and service needs during the strategic planning phase. For example, the Comprehensive Strategy team, with support from the County Board of Supervisors, implemented the Critical Hours program to increase the quantity and quality of positive afterschool activities for middle school youth. The program served more than 14,000 youth at 27 sites in its first year of operation. In addition, the county obtained eight grants to implement teen pregnancy programs in high-risk communities to reduce teen pregnancy and expand programs for girls. A task force on girls' programs is developing new gender-specific opportunities for girls, including those on probation.

The largest program associated with San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy process is the Breaking Cycles program. Through a \$6.9 million SB 1760 grant, this program provides a continuum of substance abuse services, from prevention to graduated sanctions, including treatment and family counseling. The probation department administers Breaking Cycles, in collaboration with the juvenile court and numerous public and private service providers. San Diego County's community assessment teams concept is also part of Breaking Cycles. Now operating in four of the county's regions, community assessment teams offer strength-based family programs and service referrals to more than 3,000 families in more than 80 languages and dialects. Other programs initiated through San Diego County's Comprehensive Strategy process include expanded substance abuse treatment, job training for

high-risk youth, and adoption of a shared, structured decisionmaking process involving family "risk and resiliency" checkups.

In spring 1998, San Diego County hired a full-time coordinator for its Comprehensive Strategy activities. Its 5-year strategic action plan was published in fall 1998. Attorney General Janet Reno participated in San Diego County's announcement of their strategic plan.

## Critical Success Factors

The most important lessons learned from any pilot initiative reveal underlying factors that help ensure a successful effort. Although the three pilot sites had different players, processes, structures, and schedules, several critical success factors were common to their Comprehensive Strategy planning experiences.

### Leadership

In each of the pilot sites, the Comprehensive Strategy planning process was led by a dynamic, influential, and respected community leader who was able to generate and sustain commitment from other community leaders and key community organizations. They came from different types of organizations in their respective communities, but each emerged as the community's leader in mobilizing the local effort. Equally important were the heads of the various committees, subcommittees, supporting agencies, and other organizations that helped "make things happen" in each pilot site. Whether employed or retired, from the public or private sector, these community leaders ensured that the day-to-day work of assessing and planning for a Comprehensive Strategy was accomplished.

### Agency and Community Support

Agency and community support were vital to the success of the initiative because of the significant staff time involved in collecting and analyzing data, determining priority risk factors, assessing community resources and needs, attending training sessions and committee meetings, and developing the community's strategic action plan. In San Diego, CA, for example, the city's chief of police devoted a full-time detective for 1 year to help develop the local action plan. In Lee County, the State Attorney's office supported the active participation of its staff in Comprehensive Strategy planning activities. Although the participation of

volunteers was the foundation of the successful planning process, all three sites underscored the importance of having sufficient and dedicated staff resources to accomplish the various critically important and time-consuming assessment and coordination planning activities.

## Maximizing Existing Resources and Systems

One of the cornerstones of the Comprehensive Strategy is its multiagency, coordinated approach to reducing juvenile crime and delinquency. Each of the three pilot sites incorporated existing organizational and programmatic resources into its Comprehensive Strategy planning process. In Duval County, for example, key leaders from local civic organizations were recruited, and existing data sources from the Children's Commission were tapped. Lee County drew on the framework of its existing Juvenile Justice Council, which adopted Comprehensive Strategy principles and provided support throughout the planning process. San Diego County built on risk and resource assessments that already had been completed in 10 of the county's communities and merged its State-funded local action plan efforts with Comprehensive Strategy planning to avoid duplication and maximize participants' contributions and time.

### Marketing

Engaging the media early in the Comprehensive Strategy planning process can provide the initiative with a powerful ally. As key partners in the process, the media can help promote public awareness of positive youth issues and generate community support for the planning process. Through their active involvement, local media can be sensitized to the need to ensure that incidents of crime and delinquency involving local youth are portrayed fairly and accurately. In Lee County, for example, the media not only enhanced public awareness of the community's comprehensive youth planning efforts by regularly covering Comprehensive Strategy activities, but also served as a public watchdog of the initiative's progress—a role welcomed by members of the planning team.

## Training and Technical Assistance

Participants in Comprehensive Strategy planning efforts at all three pilot sites believed that the training and technical assistance they received were essential to their success. The training helped ensure

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that participants shared a common language and a common understanding of the Comprehensive Strategy framework. For example, the Comprehensive Strategy process ideally involves a broad range of community participants, many of whom may have limited knowledge of the actual workings of both prevention programs and the juvenile justice system. A critical part of the community orientation phase, therefore, was to ensure that everyone understood the basic components of the continuum of care, characteristics of youth at risk of entering or in the juvenile justice system, system decision points, and agencies and issues involved. The site-specific technical assistance helped local planners stay focused and provided guidance during the challenging assessment and decisionmaking processes.

### Early Wins

Even while still in the planning phase of their Comprehensive Strategy initiatives, the pilot sites achieved early wins—small (and sometimes large) accomplishments that came about largely because of their coordinated, systematic assessment and planning efforts. These accomplishments—new funding, stronger partnerships, positive system changes—no matter how small, were enormously important motivators and served as early evidence of the gains the community could achieve with a comprehensive juvenile delinquency plan in place.

### Challenges and Obstacles

Equally important lessons came from the challenges and obstacles Comprehensive Strategy pilot sites encountered and the steps they took to overcome them. In general, as with the critical success factors, the pilot sites experienced a common set of challenges and obstacles as they undertook their Comprehensive Strategy initiatives.

### Data Collection

A cornerstone of the Comprehensive Strategy is its data-driven framework for planning and decisionmaking in the provision of youth services. Collecting data is the core of the risk assessment process, and the pilot sites found the data collection task to be a considerable challenge. They encountered difficulty in identifying appropriate data and data sources, accessing these data, and analyzing data that were often discordant. They also faced agency and institutional concerns about the consequences of sharing or

revealing “unfavorable” data, particularly the concern about potentially adverse effects on funding. Data collection challenges were generally overcome through a combination of patience, perseverance, technical assistance, cooperation, and compromise. When information could not be found, someone was willing to continue looking. The DRP and NCCD trainers often were able to help point the data collection efforts in the right direction, and the very collaborative nature of the process often led to the discovery of new sources of information. When different counting or tracking systems led to inconsistent numbers, members of the data collection team decided which data to use.

### Turf Issues

“Put your resources on the table and remove your hands.” This rule was adopted by one of the pilot site’s workgroups. Inter-agency “turf” issues emerged in varying degrees in each site, in part because many of the people, organizations, and agencies involved were not used to working together. Some feared potential loss of funding because of weaknesses that might be revealed during the data collection and assessment process. Others feared that they might “lose [their] market if others hear what [they’re] doing.” In general, turf issues dissipated as trust among participants grew and as they grew more comfortable working together. In San Diego County, for example, one agency representative described how identifying service gaps helped her organization better target its services to particular geographic regions within certain service categories, allowing other providers to focus on other areas.

### Scheduling and Time Demands

The Comprehensive Strategy planning process required a significant time commitment from participants, which presented scheduling and coordination challenges in each site. The support of key agency leaders facilitated staff participation, but most participants contributed to the Comprehensive Strategy planning process on their own time. Lee County found it helpful to schedule meetings at the same location and same time each month to allow participants to plan their schedules accordingly. Meeting agendas and minutes were circulated to help people plan and keep apprised of events. In San Diego County, key agency leaders were required to attend weekly meetings during the first 3 months to expedite the decisionmaking process.

### Community Participation

Bringing “all the right players to the table” proved to be somewhat of a challenge to the pilot sites, especially in the early planning stages. Particularly challenging was engaging grassroots, community-based organizations and local citizens. As with turf issues, lack of trust and fear of the implications of this new process made some reluctant to participate. Over time, persistent invitations to become involved and increasing community awareness of the Comprehensive Strategy process and its potential for service and system improvements led to increased levels of participation.

### Accomplishments and Outcomes

Each of the three pilot sites has benefited significantly from the Comprehensive Strategy planning process. While it is still too soon to assess the long-term impact on juvenile crime and delinquency, there are numerous short-term indicators of success, including promising plans for each community’s future. Among the pilot sites’ accomplishments are the following:

- ◆ Enhanced communitywide understanding of prevention services and sanctions options for juveniles.
- ◆ Expanded networking capacity and better coordination among agencies and service providers.
- ◆ Institution of performance measurement systems.
- ◆ Hiring of staff to spearhead the ongoing Comprehensive Strategy planning and implementation efforts.
- ◆ Development of comprehensive 5-year strategic action plans.

Overall, the pilot sites’ Comprehensive Strategy participants expressed a great sense of accomplishment in their hard work. Bill Scheu, chair of the Comprehensive Strategy Task Force in Duval County, FL, stated: “None of us really realized how mammoth the undertaking was, but all things said and done, we’re glad we did it. It’s exhausting, but we’re glad.” All three sites have made progress toward implementing a comprehensive continuum-of-care approach to reducing juvenile crime and delinquency in their communities, and they have begun incorporating Comprehensive Strategy principles into their existing prevention and juvenile justice systems. These communities are already

making budget and program decisions consistent with identified priorities and developing research-based solutions to address them. Moreover, they are already finding themselves better positioned, with a systematically developed, data-driven strategic plan, to leverage Federal, State, local, and foundation funds to achieve their strategic objectives.

In working with the pilot sites, OJJDP and the DRP and NCCD training and TA teams learned a great deal about ways to launch Comprehensive Strategy planning efforts. These lessons have been captured in three planning tools: a Comprehensive Strategy training curriculum, a workplan development packet, and an action guide for community planning teams. The three planning tools, which will help other communities achieve similar results, are significant outcomes of the pilot sites' Comprehensive Strategy planning experiences.

### Training Curriculum

OJJDP has supported the development of an extensive curriculum to assist in providing systematic and flexible training to communities in the Comprehensive Strategy planning process. The DRP and NCCD trainers have documented, through a series of four training events, the goals, principles, concepts, and processes of the Comprehensive Strategy to help communities understand and adopt its framework for providing effective juvenile services. These four training events include:

- ◆ **Key Leader Orientation.** A 1-day session designed to orient key policymakers and decisionmakers representing all areas of the prevention and juvenile justice systems to the principles of the Comprehensive Strategy.
- ◆ **Community Planning Team Orientation.** A 2-day session to orient members of the community planning team, who represent all areas of the prevention and juvenile justice systems, to the Comprehensive Strategy, their role in the planning process, the phases of the planning process, and the tasks involved in developing the 5-year strategic plan. The training emphasizes the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and coordination among members of the community planning team.
- ◆ **Community Assessment Training.** A 3-day training session designed to provide the community planning team with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to create the data-based

profile of its community that will form the basis of their strategic plan. The team learns how to gather, organize, and analyze the data necessary to prioritize, plan, monitor, and evaluate the community's continuum of care.

- ◆ **Community Planning Training.** A 3-day session designed to assist the community planning team in developing an outcome-focused, data-driven, research-based 5-year strategic plan. Three major areas are covered in this training: outcome-focused planning and evaluation, promising approaches to fill identified service/programmatic gaps, and development of the strategic plan.

### Workplan Development Packet

A workplan development packet is currently being used to determine how local training and TA events are designed and delivered to help communities develop strategic plans and implement a comprehensive approach for addressing their juvenile justice needs. Completed by a core team of community members, the packet captures baseline information about the community's existing initiatives, planning processes, key leadership, and strengths and areas for improvement in existing systems and structures. With this information, the training team tailors a training and TA plan that builds on the current circumstances, direction, and needs of the community to ensure a successful Comprehensive Strategy planning process.

### Action Guide for Community Planning Teams

Just as the training curriculum was designed to assist in building community capacity to plan and implement a Comprehensive Strategy, an action guide was designed to make the community an active player in the process. It provides a comprehensive set of worksheets, questions, checklists, and forms to help communities organize their assessment and planning efforts and guide the training and TA processes as they develop their 5-year strategic plans.

These tools draw extensively on the experiences of the three pilot sites and are being developed and tested in eight competitively selected States and up to six communities in each State. Selected States and communities receive training and technical assistance to develop local strategic plans for preventing and reducing juvenile crime and delinquency. As the eight States—Florida,

Iowa, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, and Wisconsin—and their local communities begin to develop and implement their own Comprehensive Strategy plans to address serious, violent, and chronic delinquency, they are benefiting enormously from the experiences and products of the pilot sites. Once the tools are tested, it is anticipated that they will assist other States and communities to develop a Comprehensive Strategy plan.

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