

the past year.

- More than 40% of Washington high school seniors report using alcohol in the past 30 days.
- Almost a third of Washington 6th graders have tried alcohol.
- Marijuana use among 8th and 12th graders has increased. By 12th grade, over 40% of Washington students have tried marijuana.
- By the 12th grade, over 40% of students have tried marijuana.
- The percentage of 12th graders who reported they had tried methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime dropped by 21% between 2006 and 2008.
- Two-thirds of youth entering state Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facilities in SFY 2009 and screened, had substance abuse related problems,
- In state fiscal year 2009, 509 youth received treatment under the chemical dependency disposition alternative.

Youth Gangs

Since the mid-20th century, gang violence in this country has become widespread—all 50 states and the District of Columbia report gang problems, and reports have increased for 5 of the past 7 years. Despite the steady growth in the number and size of gangs across the United States and the criminal behavior and violence they spawn, little is known about the dynamics that drive gangs and how to best combat their growth. For instance, no consensus exists on how gangs form, and few gang prevention programs have been rigorously evaluated.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) published a bulletin in December of 2010 entitled *Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs*. Some of the key findings from that include:

- Youth join gangs for protection, enjoyment, respect, money, or because a friend is in a gang.
- Youth are at higher risk of joining a gang if they engage in delinquent behaviors, are

aggressive or violent, experience multiple care-taker transitions, have many problems at school, associate with other gang-involved youth, or live in communities where they feel unsafe and where many youth are in trouble.

- To prevent youth from joining gangs, communities must strengthen families and schools, improve community supervision, train teachers and parents to manage disruptive youth, and teach students interpersonal skills.

When starting a program for delinquency and gang prevention, a community should conduct a gang-problem assessment to identify elevated risk factors that lead to child delinquency and gang involvement. Communities must define youth gangs, locate them, and identify and target the youth who are at greatest risk of joining. OJJDP has a Comprehensive Gang Model to help communities develop a continuum of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression programs and strategies.

In a cooperative effort between the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) and the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) to examine the threat posed to the United States by criminal gangs, The “National Gang Threat Assessment 2011” was published. The report can be found on-line in its entirety at <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/2011-national-gang-threat-assessment>. The assessment is based on federal, state, and local law enforcement information and is supplemented by information retrieved from open sources.

The report lists the following key findings:

- There are approximately 1.4 million active street, prison and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG) comprising more than 33,000 gangs in the United States. Gang membership increased most significantly in the Northeast and Southeast regions, although the West and Great Lakes regions boast the highest number of gang members. Neighborhood-based gangs, hybrid gang members, and national-level gangs such as the Surenos are rapidly expanding in many jurisdictions. Many communities are also experiencing an increase in ethnic-based gangs such as African, Asian, Caribbean and Eurasian gangs.

- Gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90 percent in several others, according to NGIC analysis.
- Gangs are increasingly engaging in non-traditional gang-related crime, such as alien smuggling, human trafficking, and prostitution.
- Gang members continue to engage in gang activity while incarcerated. Family members play pivotal roles in assisting or facilitating gang activities and recruitment during a gang members' incarceration. Gang members in some correctional facilities are adopting radical religious views while incarcerated.
- Gangs encourage members, associates, and relatives to obtain law enforcement, judiciary, or legal employment in order to gather information on rival gangs and law enforcement operations. Gang infiltration of the military continues to pose a significant criminal threat, as members of at least 53 gangs have been identified on both domestic and international military installations. Gang members who learn advanced weaponry and combat techniques in the military are at risk of employing these skills on the street when they return to their communities.
- Gangs on Indian Reservations often emulate national-level gangs and adopt names and identifiers from nationally recognized urban gangs. Gang members on some Indian Reservations are associating with gang members in the community to commit crime.
- Gangs are becoming increasingly adaptable and sophisticated, employing new and advanced technology to facilitate criminal activity discreetly, enhance their criminal operations, and connect with other gang members, criminal organizations, and potential recruits nationwide and even worldwide.
- Gang involvement in alien smuggling, human trafficking, and prostitution is increasing primarily due to their higher profitability and lower risks of detention and punishment than that of drug and weapons trafficking. Over the past year, federal, state, and local law enforcement officials in at least 35 states and

US territories have reported that gangs in their jurisdictions are involved in alien smuggling, human trafficking, or prostitution.

- Human trafficking victims - usually women and children - are often forced, coerced, or led with fraudulent pretense into prostitution and forced labor. The Bloods, MS-13, Surenos, and Somali gangs have been reportedly involved in human trafficking, according to multiple law enforcement and NGIC reporting.

NGIC reporting indicates that juvenile gangs are responsible for a majority of crime in various jurisdictions in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

Youth gang membership

There is no consensus on the definition of a youth gang. However, the following criteria are widely accepted among researchers for classifying groups as gangs:

- The group has three or more members, generally aged 12-24.
- Members share an identity, typically linked to a name, and often other symbols.
- Members view themselves as a gang, and they are recognized by others as a gang.
- The group has some permanence and a degree of organization.
- The group is involved in an elevated level of criminal activity.

Gang membership may often be less of a long-term commitment than is commonly believed. Studies in Denver and Rochester report that half of the male youth gang members belonged to a gang for less than one year. The studies also found that gang members are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime.

Many researchers have found that youth gangs have low levels of organizational sophistication and are typically loose in structure.

Washington State Criminal Street Gang Prevention & Intervention Grant Programs

Washington State RCW 9.101.010 defines criminal street gang as: *“any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, and whose members or associates individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal street gang activity. This definition does not apply to employees engaged in concerted activities for their mutual aid and protection, or to the activities of labor and bona fide non-profit organization or their members agents.”*

The National Gang Threat Assessment has identified 67 named, recognized gangs in Washington State.

The 2012 Washington State Legislature recognized that street gang activities are a serious problem that threatens the long-term economic, social, and public safety interests of Washington State and its counties and cities. Local communities require assistance to reduce criminal street gang activity and to increase criminal street gang intervention and prevention services that can strengthen families, improve school performance, reduce criminal activity, and promote pro-social development and success among our state’s young adults. As a result, the Legislature has invested funds for a Criminal Street Gang Prevention and Intervention Grant Program to be administered by the WA-PCJJ.

Two programs were funded, one in the City of Tacoma and one in Yakima County. Additionally, the WA-PCJJ contracted with an independent evaluator to conduct the first year evaluation. For additional information on the projects funded see the Programs & Projects section of this report.

Child Abuse

In 2011, 75,412 children were referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) in Washington State.

This reflects a decrease of 2,362 from the number of children referred in 2010 (77,774).

Research continues to document a link between domestic violence and substance abuse, and domestic violence and child abuse. According to the National Youth Law Center, in homes where domestic violence occurs there is a 30 to 60 percent likelihood that child abuse also is happening. Nationally, nearly one million children each year are confirmed by State agencies as abused and neglected, and over 1,200 children tragically die at the hands of caretaker. (Prevent Child Abuse America, September 2007)

Child abuse and neglect have known detrimental effects on the physical, psychological, cognitive and behavioral development of children (National Research Council 1993). These consequences range from minor to severe, and include physical injuries, brain damage, chronic low self-esteem, problems with bonding and forming relationships, developmental delays, learning disorders, and aggressive and anti-social behaviors. More recently, Vincent Felitti, M.D. has demonstrated a connection between childhood abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and adult obesity, thus increasing weight-related health risks. Child maltreatment has been linked with long-term negative societal consequences. For example, studies link child maltreatment with increased risk of low academic achievement, drug use, teen pregnancy, generational child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminality (Widom, 1992; Kelly, Thornberry, and Smith, 1997).

“Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States,” written for Prevent Child Abuse America by Ching-Tung Wang, Ph.D. and John Holten, Ph.D., states, “It is well documented that children who have been abused or neglected are more likely to experience adverse outcomes throughout their life span in a number of areas” (summarized):

- Poor physical health
- Poor emotional and mental health
- Social difficulties
- Cognitive dysfunction
- High-risk health behavior
- Behavior problems