NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Service.

**COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Pete Ricketts, Governor

Office of Violence Prevention

Annual Report to the Governor & Nebraska Legislature

November 1, 2018

Christopher Harris
Director | OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

OFFICE 402-471-3813
Chris.Harris@nebraska.gov

Darrell Fisher, Executive Director

Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

P.O. Box 94946
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

OFFICE 402-471-2194   FAX 402-471-2837
NCC.Webmaster@Nebraska.gov

ncc.nebraska.gov

Introduction

The Director of the Office of Violence Prevention of the Nebraska Commission of Law Enforcement and Criminal justice is responsible for generating an annual report on the Office of Violence Prevention programs in Nebraska by Nebraska Revised Statute § 81-1450. This 2018 report is fulfilling this statutory duty.

The primary responsibility of the State Office of Violence Prevention is to help develop, foster, promote, and assess statewide violence prevention programs in the State of Nebraska.

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) aids privately funded organizations, local government subdivisions, and other community groups in developing Prevention, Intervention, and Enforcement theories and techniques.

Through a competitive grants process administered by the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Crime Commission), the Office of Violence Prevention awards $350,000 annually to organizations in Nebraska that have shown a history of documented success or new programs which show promise in helping to reduce violent crime in Nebraska.

The grant recipients are required to develop goals, objectives and performance indicators in order to help evaluate the success of the financial distribution. Upon awarding of the funds, grantees are required to submit quarterly activity and cash reports to the Office of Violence Prevention/Crime Commission. Also, grantees are required to provide an evaluation report and a portion of the grant funds can be used for a professional evaluator. The report must provide a comprehensive review of the program's overall effort, and measurable results during the grant cycle. Those results are provided to the Office of Violence Prevention.

The Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Council

In May of 2009, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 63, establishing the Office of Violence Prevention within the Nebraska Crime Commission. A provision within LB 63 provided for the establishment of the Advisory Council to the Office of Violence Prevention. The Governor appointed Advisory Council is to meet quarterly and is directed to recommend – to the Crime Commission -- rules and regulation regarding fundraising, program evaluation, coordination of programs, and criteria used to assess and award funds to violence prevention programs.

Program Priority focus

Priority for funding is given to communities and organizations seeking to implement violence prevention programs which appear to have the greatest benefit to the state and which have, as goals, the reduction of street and gang violence, and the reduction of homicides and injuries caused by firearms. In March of 2015, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 167 which also included the creation of youth employment opportunities in high-crime areas as an additional priority focus.

2018 Grantees:

Boys Town of South Omaha's - In-Home Family Services (IHFS): $20,000

Boys Town works to empower youth and families in their community to reduce the impact of poverty and violence while achieving greater economic stability by focusing on teaching the skills necessary for children and families to achieve safety and success in their neighborhoods. Boys Town of South Omaha works to decrease crime, provide intervention and increase overall safety within the South Omaha community. By engaging families in preventive-based services to target critical skills that are lacking in a family's current lifestyle, it is more likely that the family will avoid involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. It is through this process of prevention that high-risk families will be able to receive services in the convenience of their own home to work through crisis situations while increasing safety measures and staying together. Boys Town Family Consultants are prepared to respond to safety issues at all times of the day and night. They are on call, along with Boys Town supervisory staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. Families are encouraged to call Consultants when safety issues arise or even when they are aware they may be nearing a clisis situation in order to develop a plan to immediately mitigate the crisis situation at hand prior to the situation becoming violent in nature. Boys Town's In-Home Family Services Model ensures the development of skills to meet various family needs such as appropriate disciplinary strategies, employment, housing, and increased knowledge of how and where to access community resources. The model includes the use of formal assessments and the development of a service plan. Assessments not only help in the development of a service plan, but also allow Consultants to determine if a family is in need of additional community supports and services that will help them achieve stability and success.

AA Empowerment Network- Omaha 360 Collaborative & Step up Omaha Program: $85,000

The Empowerment Network Spear heads the Omaha 360 Collaboration. The 360 Collaboration Identifies Omaha's emerging needs then creates strategies and develops plans to address the needed areas. Strategies and plans have been developed in a number of areas including: community engagement; job development and training; education and youth development; business development and entrepreneurship; housing and neighborhood development; violence intervention and prevention; voter registration and participation; arts, culture, and history revitalization; and, communications and media expansion and enhancement. Step up Omaha is a summer youth job program that recruits, trains, and places prepared Omaha youth and young adults age 14 to 21, in mutually beneficial paid summer jobs and work experience opportunities.

NorthStar Foundation- Athletic Engagement and Outreach Program: $69,835

NorthStar Foundation deploys a comprehensive sequence of athletic engagement and outreach programming for low-income, at-risk young men in North Omaha. The NorthStar Athletic Engagement and Outreach Project engages the youth in enriching out-of-school time programming, as well as serves as a vehicle to identify, recruit, and retain beneficiaries targeted for participation in the full complement of after school services throughout the school year.

Center for Holistic Development - Urban Youth BOLT: $19,273

The Center for Holistic Development, Inc. would like to provide an enhanced program to address the mental and emotional concerns of African American youth who are at risk for involvement in the Juvenile Justice system. The B.O.L.T. (Building Our Leaders Today) uses gender specific, evidence based curriculum to build internal assets for successful adulthood. This program works in conjunction with our Building a Healthy family using a holistic approach to create connections to other community resources to provide support for families to create a healthy environment for the young person. Parental involvement is a critical element in successful completion of any prevention or early intervention program. The inclusion of a strategy to improve parental engagement and provide a valuable resource for parents is vital to the success of this program. Overall, parent involvement has been shown to be supportive in reducing recidivism. Effective communication, accountability and respect of self and others are a major part of the B.O.L.T. curriculum.

Omaha Police Athletics Community Engagement- Youth Violence Prevention: $10,000

Police Athletics for Community Engagement (P.A.C.E. Omaha) is a Police Community Relations initiative based on a direct intervention and prevention design to help "at-risk" and disadvantaged youth avoid the negative influences of street gangs and crime by being involved in free safe organized athletics provided by police officers, who volunteer as their coaches and role models. P.A.C.E. Omaha uses the universal language of sports to build much needed bridges between youth and citizens living in disadvantaged neighborhoods and the police officers that work those areas. Most of the staff and volunteers are police officers and business professionals in the Omaha area. P.A.C.E. Omaha was designed to approach the youth in our community that have joined gangs, are at risk of joining gangs or disadvantaged kids ages 8 to 18 that would never have the finances to join organized sports in their neighborhoods The P.A.C.E. model places police officers and youth on teams playing during times where idle youth have statistically gotten into trouble with crime, delinquency or have been victimized by the criminal element. The organization strives to build the much needed bridge in the community between police and the citizens of the neighborhoods they protect.

Lancaster County- Operation Tipping Point: $25,375

Operation Tipping Point (OTP) has a Steering Committee of partners and justice stakeholders to address the increasing violent crimes associated with gangs in Lincoln, Nebraska. A full-time Gang Outreach Specialist serves as a link between primary and secondary prevention/intervention efforts and engagement of community partners. The Gang Outreach Specialist is located within Lincoln Police Departments Gang Unit. This grant focuses on the Gang Specialist to continue to facilitate Operation Tipping Point meetings and coordinate with Lincoln Public Schools, parents, community partners to reduce gang membership, and increase gang intelligence.

YouTurn – Case Management/Advocacy Services: $10,094

YouTurn is committed to using evidence-based strategies of suppression, intervention and prevention to deter gangs and violence. YouTurn prevention strategies target youth at risk of gang involvement with the goal of reducing the number of youth who join gangs. Intervention strategies provide services for adolescents who are actively involved in gangs to push them away from gangs. Suppression strategies target older, criminally active gang members. YouTurn promotes a collaborative approach that involves adolescents/young adults, parents/guardians, schools, community-based service providers, law enforcement and other key community stakeholders. YouTurn creates opportunities to "break the cycle" of violence by helping adolescents and young adults, seek positive alternatives to gangs and violence, thus reducing the costly impact of gangs and violence in our neighborhoods and schools. To accomplish this, YouTurn staff utilizes evidence-based strategies and program materials to effectively engage adolescents and young adults.

The Hope Center for Kids- Village Basketball Alliance: $21,000

The efforts of Omaha 360 through the past four years have prompted youth-serving community organizations to work together to find creative ways to provide impactful activities for young people, particularly in North Omaha. The desire is for young people to be connected to youth-serving organizations where positive, healthy life-style principles are shared. Village Basketball Alliance (VBA) was created in 2011 to support this vision. Village Basketball Alliance youth will have a safe place to interact without fear of violence and learn positive social skills. Up to 150 youth participate in each 10 week league. Along with the participants in the league, 50-100 peers and family members attend each week to watch the games. As many as 250 people have attended VBA on a weekly basis

Banisters Leadership Academy- Leadership in Action Youth Pillar Workshop: $20,000

Leadership in action Youth Pillar aims to empower youth with the 12 Pillars of Leadership which they may use to succeed at school and in their community. The youth in the program are engaged, challenged, and empowered with resources, services, and education to help them lead in school and in their community. The program offers hands on team building activities that challenges youth with opportunities to apply their acquired knowledge.

Black Men United- Intro to the trades: $27,000

Intro to the Trades and Soft Skill Training is a program designed to provide entry-level soft skills, career assessments, introductory trade skills and safety training, as well as post program support to incarcerated teens that have been adjudicated as adults due to violent felonies between the ages of 16 - 21. This program is held inside the NCYF will consist of an introduction to the trades, employability training (soft skills, life skills, interview skills, goal setting) and construction basics. It will also include CPR certification and OSHA 10 safety certification, which will significantly enhance job market opportunities for the students. Upon completion, Black Men United will support students, on a voluntary basis, upon release from incarceration,

5

by connecting them directly to job opportunities, additional training opportunities, or helping them navigate entrance into college and with mentors if desired. Graduating students will receive post-release goal setting support, mentoring and direct connection to other critical resources.

Indian Center- The Native Connection for Life Youth Program: $28,423

Goals of this program include: A) Utilization of school-based social and emotional learning programs to improve children's academic performance and also reduce substance use, aggression, and other risky and antisocial behaviors; B) Utilization of evidence-based American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum to build youths' self-esteem and to assist them in recognizing and eliminating self-destructive behavior, including suicide and substance use; C) To promote good academic habits, including providing a positive learning environment and homework assistance provided by the University of Nebraska's UNL UNITE Program; D) To provide character building framework through culture awareness and education: this is key to prevention of problems surrounding at-risk youth, being that culture, tradition and prayer are the way to a healthy mind, body, and spirit. E) Frequently engage youth in prosocial activities

Goodwill Industries- YouthBuild: $25,000

YouthBuild is a program for individuals, ages 16 to 24, who have struggled with traditional school and are looking to make a positive change in their lives. Individuals in the program split their days between GED classroom learning and construction training on active worksites. The participants are also included in mentoring, life skills development, leadership activities and job readiness.

Completed Evaluations:

1. **Hope Center for Kids: Village Basketball Alliance**
2. **City of Omaha: Omaha Intelligence Tracking System Project**
3. **NorthStar Foundation: Youth Athletic and Academic Engagement Program**
4. **Center for Holistic Development: Urban Youth B.O.L.T.**
5. **GoodWill Industries: YouthBuild**

The Hope Center for Kids:

Village Basketball Alliance ♦ Spring 2018 Session

Evaluation Report

Prepared by:

Tova Hettinger, MSW/MPA Student

with Jeanette Harder, PhD and Natalie Scarpa, MSW/MPA Student

June 11, 2018

Purpose of Evaluation

The STEPs evaluation team partnered with Hope Center for Kids to complete a process and outcome evaluation of the Spring 2018 session of the Village Basketball Alliance (VBA) program. To accomplish the evaluation, STEPs gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The results and program recommendations are outlined below. The evaluation methodology and survey tools conclude the report.

Findings: Program Implementation

Below, we present the qualitative findings to inform recommendations to strengthen program implementation as well as to provide Hope Center with valuable insights from current players. Qualitative data was collected via focus groups and an interview with VBA players.

A majority of the players had been involved with VBA for **multiple sessions**, citing a variety of reasons for their continued involvement with the basketball league.

> *"keeping me in shape..."*

> *"I don't have time to gang bang..."*

> *"stress relief"*

Other players spoke to the community and networking that VBA provides to them.

> *"I say the networking piece of it. Keeping those guys that you might not normally see on a regular but always have known..."*

Interactions with Teammates, Coaches, and Opposing Players

Overall, players identified having positive interactions with teammates, coaches, and opposing players throughout participation in VBA. In regards to team bonding, several players discussed the relationships they have developed with their teammates.

> *"My team probably been with them for three or four sessions... We with each other every day. We talk on and off the court."*

> *"It brought me closer to other people probably I would never talked to...."*

Several players mentioned the competitive atmosphere of the league as something that can impact the overall nature of communication and interactions.

> *"It could be a lot positive and negative depending on how the game is going.... We be getting mad with each other, but hold composure and don't get too excessive. We all grown here."*

> *"It brings out the best in people. Just the competition."*
> *"They the enemy as long as the game is going. As soon as it's over with, call me. We can go eat. We can go hang out afterwards."*

Positive Social Supports. Several players spoke to the positive influences of Hope Center leaders, like Pastor King (Commissioner of VBA).

> *"Pastor King has been a great influence on my life, for the record."*

Another player spoke about other players being *"role models"* for them.

> *"They all been role models. They helped me with a lot of stuff. I'm a member of the {team name} so those are role models to me. They call me, check on me, help me get jobs, stuff like that."*

One individual spoke to the importance of being able to see individuals in a different light, regardless of gang affiliation off the court.

> *"So I kinda like seeing em', like the gang members a whole different wing man, as you see them on the court, you really don't see like a gang in them, you see like a whole different person."*

Police Presence

Regarding police presence, several of the players differentiated between the sheriff and members of the Omaha Police Department (OPD), expressing varied feelings about each subset of law enforcement.

Regarding OPD, one player said,

> *"That gang unit, man... You be on the court, you can't even concentrate on your shot. You looking like where they at now? You mess around, call a timeout, until they leave."*

Regarding the sheriff, one player said,

> *"I like the sheriff here though. The sheriff is good. The police department, no, they can't come here, but at least the sheriff come in here and at least pray with us before the game starts and stuff like that. That's cool. That's solid right there...."*

Overall, players seemed to share split feelings regarding the presence of security at the games. Some saw it as vital, others saw it as less necessary.

> *"I like the cops. Keep the cops here 'cause it's some out of control guys..."*

> *"Yeah you don't need a lot of them. You don't need a lot of security, I'm being honest with you. Like I say, everybody know everybody man. It is life and if you really want it to be real, in y'all life you don't have all that security so you don't need all that security in here. We have to solve our own problems. We cool the way it is."*

VBA and Community Violence

When asked about community violence and its relation to VBA, several of the players spoke to the positive impact that VBA has for them and the greater community.

> *"I think VBA impacts community violence or lack thereof because people look forward to this. We look forward to coming here Monday for these four hours to play and*

> *watch everybody else too whereas if we don't have this, anybody can be somewhere doing anything else. It serves as a positive place for grown men and kids alike in the community to come. Just enjoy yourselves and play some basketball and be safe."*
>
> *"I think the VBA can impact community violence in the fact that everybody really come around. Maybe sometimes people wouldn't be around each other so it really helps it out. It minimizes it."*

Another player said that although VBA plays a part in helping community violence, it can only be a part of the solution.

> *"Everything positive is just a piece man. Not even church itself can solve everything. Everything is just a piece. VBA is a piece of the puzzle. As long as VBA is going, VBA gonna help out the community somehow… Everything you can do every day to just get your mind off of the stresses of life and keep it going."*

Upon conclusion of the focus groups, players were asked what they would say to a friend considering whether to join VBA. A majority of the individuals said they would absolutely refer a friend as it would provide more competition and fun in the league. Several individuals also stated that the more people involved in the league, the more teams there are, providing greater competition.

Findings: Outcome Evaluation

Below, we present the quantitative findings to inform recommendations to strengthen program implementation. Quantitative data was collected using three standardized scales in a pre/posttest research design. The tools measured the change players experienced on the following three outcomes:

1. Increased positive relationships.

2. Increased positive social skills.

3. Improved attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement.

Description of Players

Of the 94 players who completed a pretest, 82 also completed a posttest. <u>A majority of players responding to both the pre and posttest identified as African American</u>. Other races identified included African (9%), Multi/Bi-racial (2%), Hispanic/Latino (2%), Native American (1%), White (1%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (1%).

A majority of players were between ages 18-30 years of age with the average age being 26.5 years old.

Pretest Posttest

31 and over

Under 30 years old

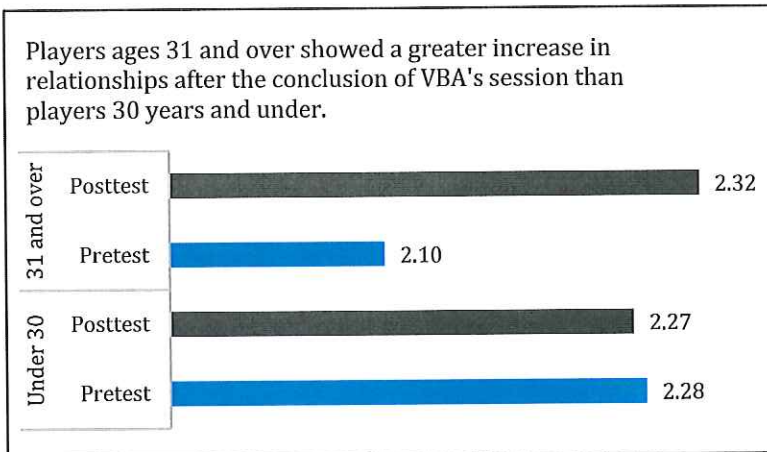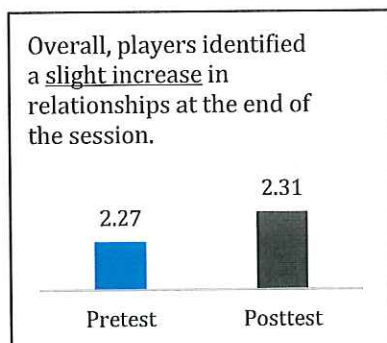0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80
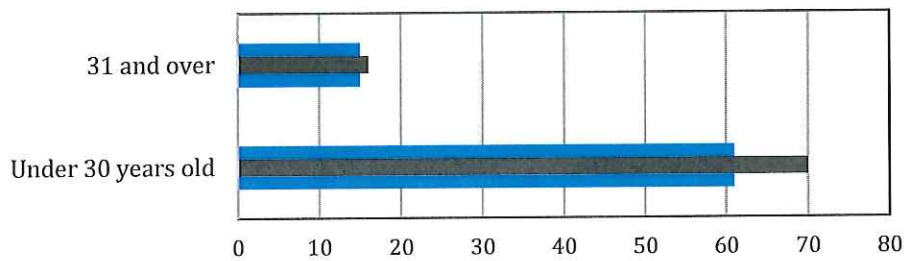
A majority of players identified participating in multiple VBA sessions prior to the most recent session.

After matching the pre and posttest surveys, there were <u>72 matching pairs of surveys</u> which could be analyzed. Below shows the analysis resulting from the surveys.

Have you participated in a previous VBA session?

23

63

■ No ■ Yes
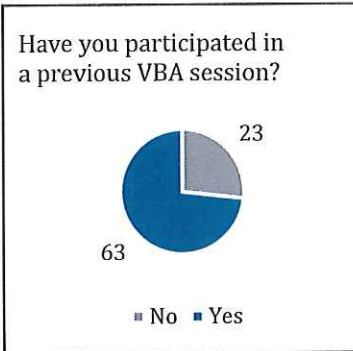
Outcome 1: Increase Positive Relationships

Overall, players showed a slight increase in the number of supportive adult relationships from the beginning to end of the session. Across multiple dimensions of support, players' scores increased from an average of 2.27 before the session to 2.31 after the session. This increase in positive relationships showed a higher increase for VBA players 31 years of age and over, increasing from an average score of 2.10 to an average of 2.32 post-session.

Overall, players identified a <u>slight increase</u> in relationships at the end of the session.

2.27   2.31

Pretest   Posttest

Players ages 31 and over showed a greater increase in relationships after the conclusion of VBA's session than players 30 years and under.

31 and over — Posttest 2.32
31 and over — Pretest   2.10
Under 30 — Posttest   2.27
Under 30 — Pretest   2.28

When breaking out the data responses by teams, it can be seen that a majority of teams had an increase in the number of positive relationships they could identify at the end of VBA's session. Several teams had lower average scores relating to positive relationships post session.

At posttest, a majority of teams showed an increase in positive relationships post VBA session.
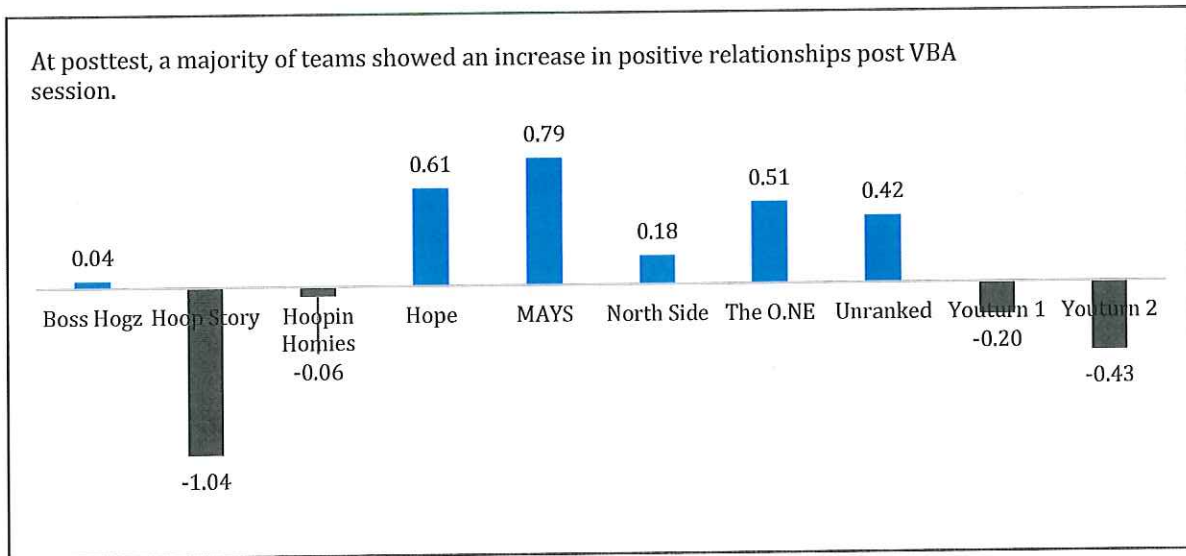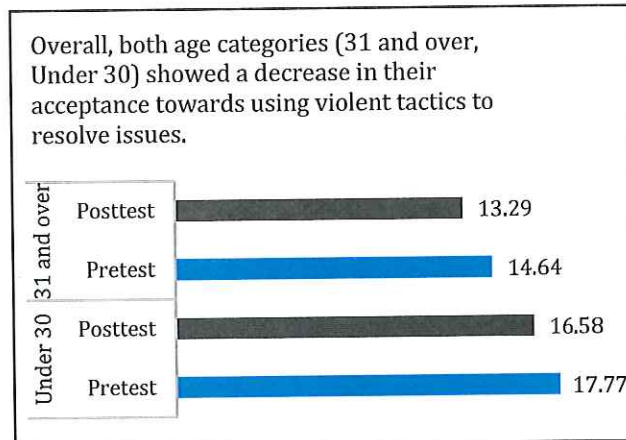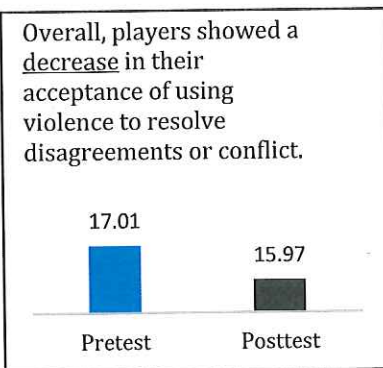

Many teams had small sample sizes, ranging between 5-11, but falling closer to 5. One team was not included in this analysis because their sample size was too small.

Outcome 2: Increased Positive Social Skills

Overall, VBA players showed an impact on increasing positive social skills. On average, players were less accepting of using violence to resolve conflict after the session than they were prior to the session. Players began the session with an average score of 17.01, and ended with an average of 15.97. When accounting for age, all players showed a similar decrease in their acceptance of using violence (under 30: -1.19, 31 and over: -1.35). It should be noted that individuals under 30 years of age showed a higher pretest score than individuals over 31.

Overall, players showed a **decrease** in their acceptance of using violence to resolve disagreements or conflict.

Overall, both age categories (31 and over, Under 30) showed a decrease in their acceptance towards using violent tactics to resolve issues.

When breaking out the data responses by teams, it can be seen that a majority of teams had a decrease in their acceptance of using violent tactics to resolve conflicts after the

conclusion of VBA's session. Two teams showed an increase in their acceptance of using violence to resolve issues.

A majority of teams showed a decrease in their acceptance of using violence to resolve conflict.

Team	Value
Boss Hogz	-0.33
Hoop Story	-2.40
Hoopin Homies	-1.50
Hope	-2.00
MAYS	-3.00
North Side	0.40
The O.NE	-3.29
Unranked	-1.60
Youturn 1	1.09
Youturn 2	0.00

Many teams had small sample sizes, ranging between 5-11, but falling closer to 5. One team also not included in this analysis because their sample size was too small.
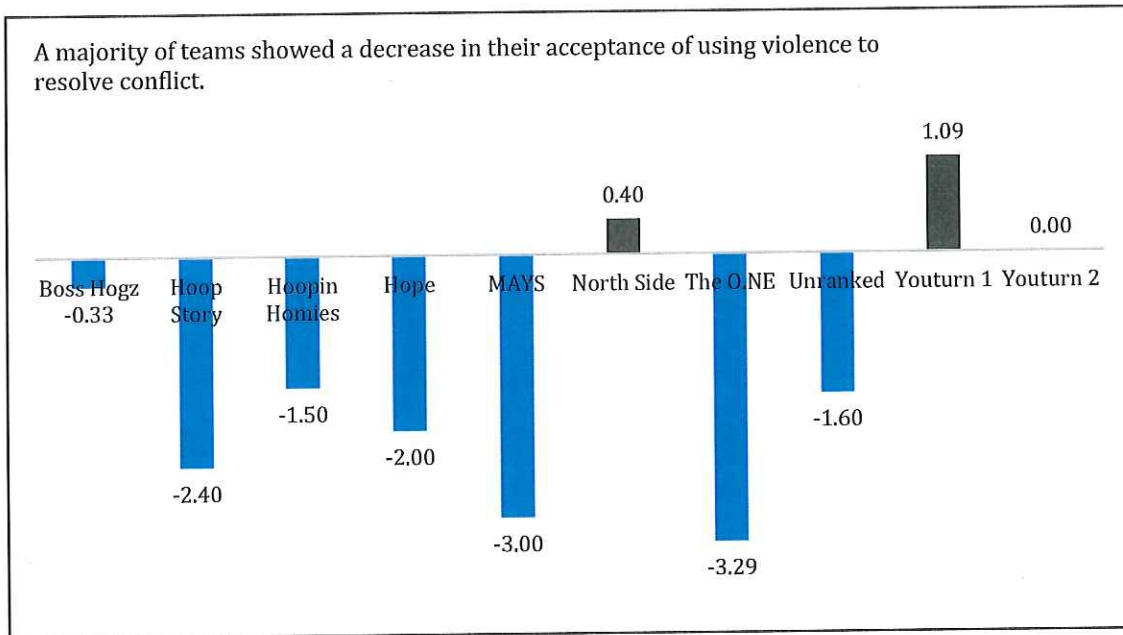
Outcome 3: Improved attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement.

Overall, VBA players showed a slight decrease in their acceptance of gangs, showing improved attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement. Overall, players reported a score of 2.42 at the beginning of the VBA session, indicating lower levels of gang acceptance from the start. Players concluded the session with a lower average of 2.15. When broken out by age, the decrease in acceptance towards gang involvement was greater for VBA players 31 years of age and over. Players under 30 also showed a slight decrease.

Overall, players showed **a slight decrease** in their acceptance towards gangs.

2.42

2.15

Pretest   Posttest

Both age groups showed a **decrease** in acceptance towards gangs, however players 31 years and over showed a **larger decrease**.

	Pretest/Posttest	Value
31 and over	Posttest	0.73
	Pretest	1.80
Under 30	Posttest	2.56
	Pretest	2.67

When breaking out the data responses by teams, it can be seen that a majority of teams had a decrease in their acceptance towards gangs after the VBA session ended.

All teams except for 2 showed a **decrease** in acceptance towards gangs.

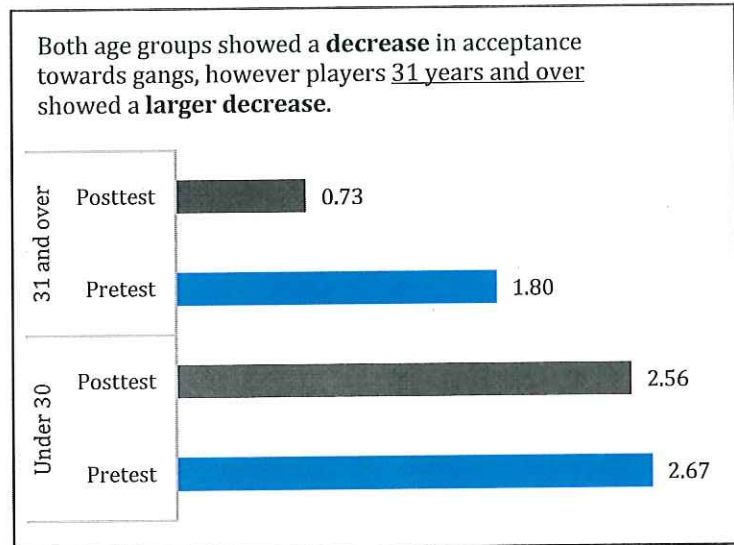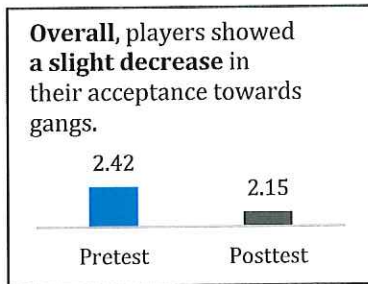| Team	Value
Boss Hogz	-1.11
Hoop Story	-0.40
Hoopin Homies	-0.50
Hope	-0.80
MAYS	-0.83
North Side	-0.20
The O.NE	0.00
Unranked	-0.40
Youturn 1	0.45
Youturn 2	0.43

Many teams had small sample sizes, ranging between 5-11, but falling closer to 5.
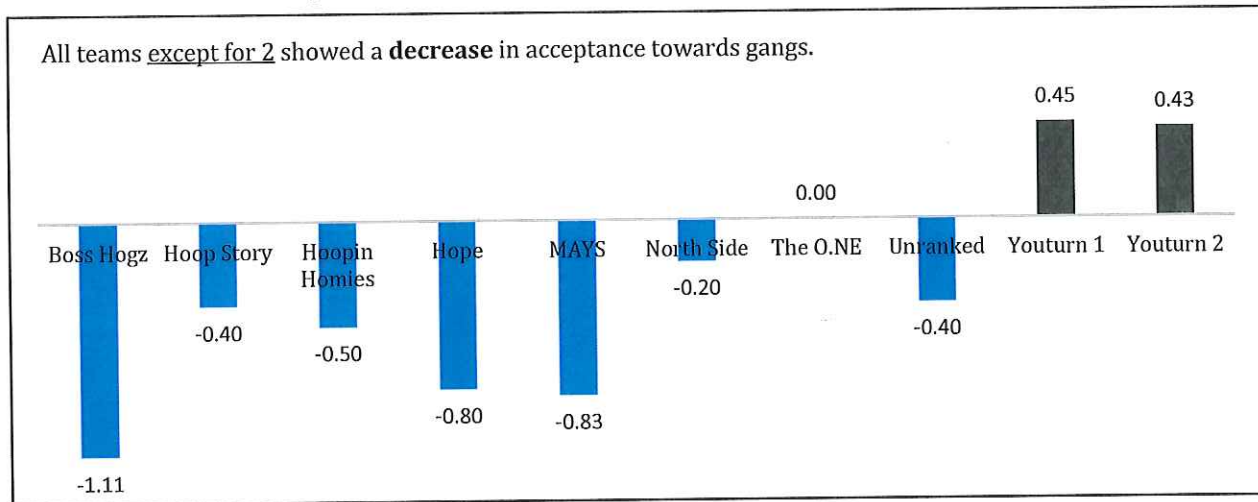One team also not included in this analysis because their sample size was too small.

Findings: Satisfaction Survey

Players' level of satisfaction was assessed through a survey administered at the end of the session consisting of scale item (6-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and open-ended questions. The questions assessed players' satisfaction with safety/the environment, relationships, and overall experience with the program.

Players reported a high degree of satisfaction across all questions; at least 85% of players reported some degree of satisfaction with all 9 scale-item questions (see figure below).
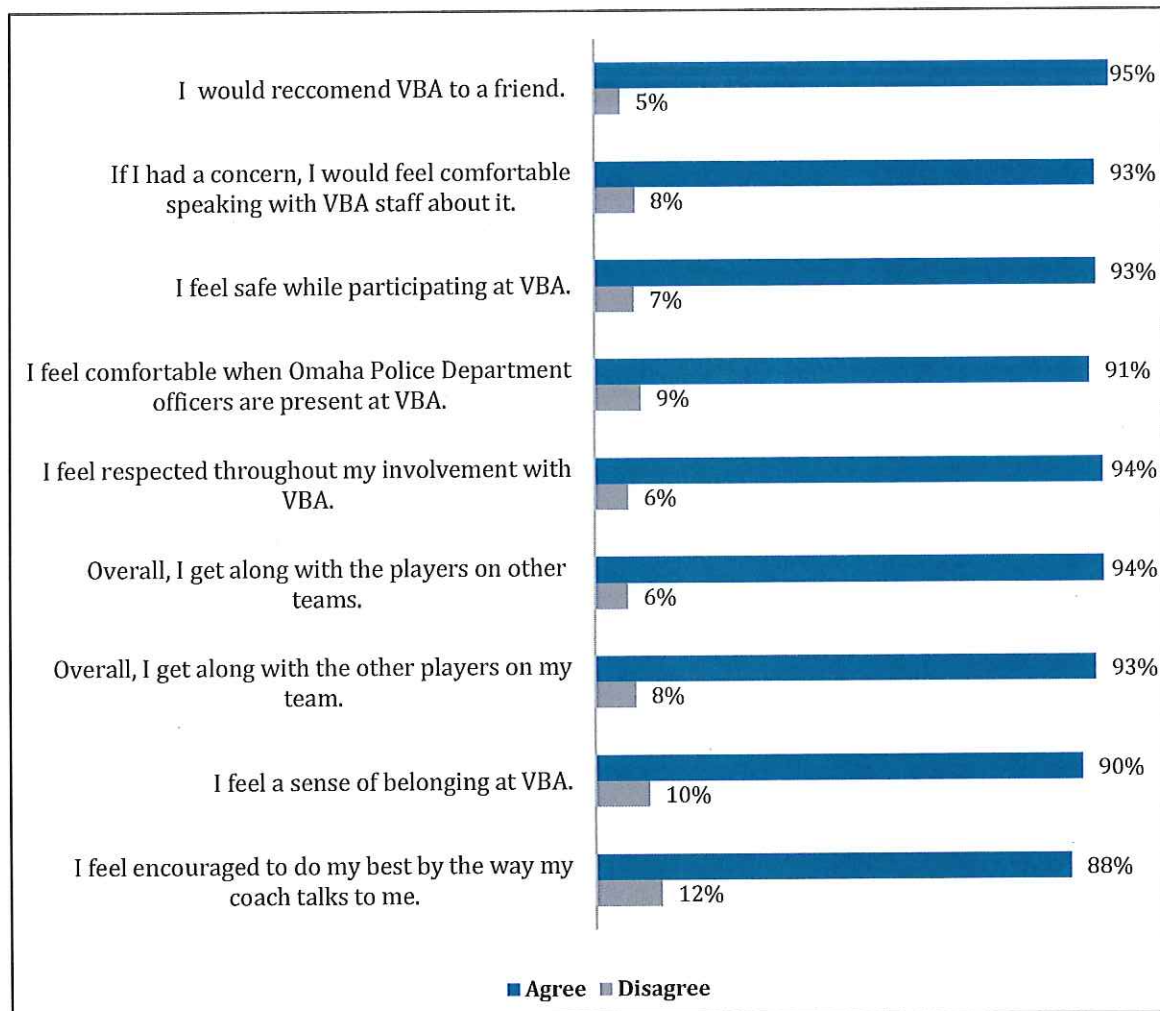
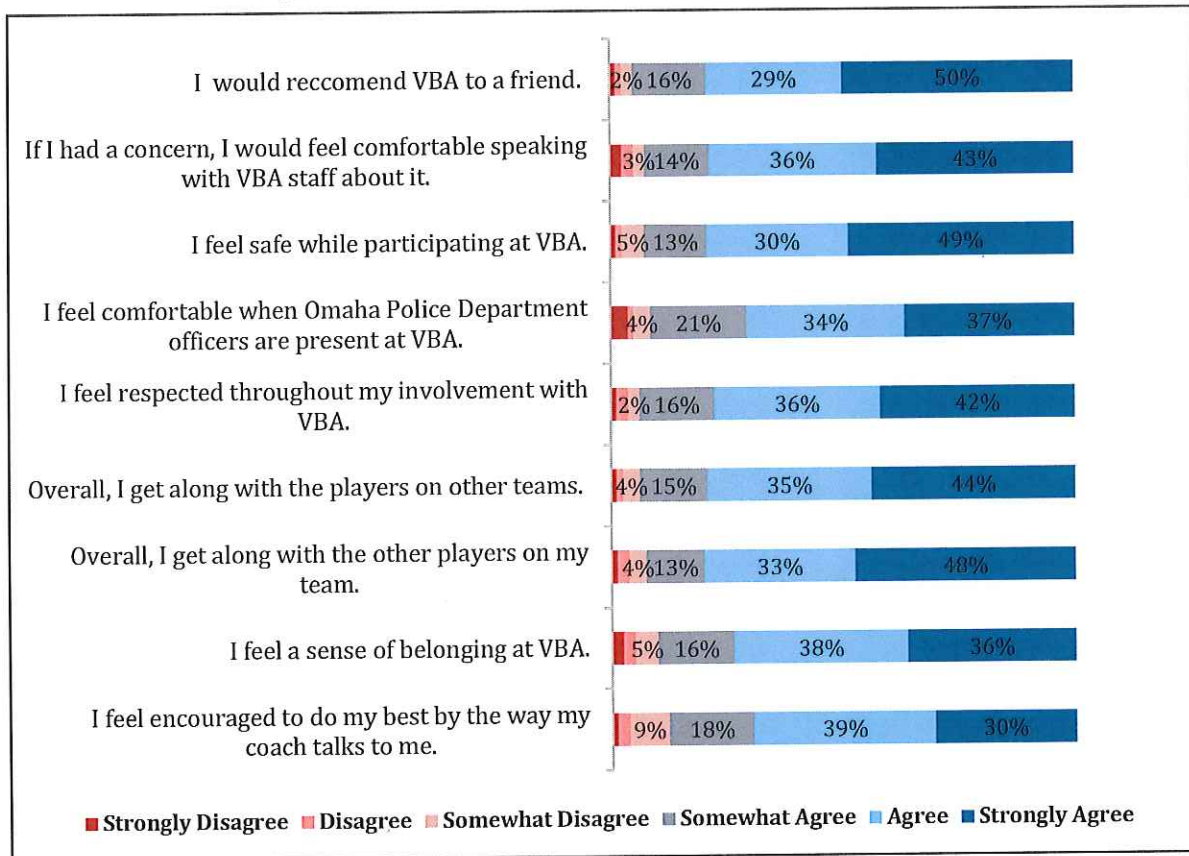Players reported the highest levels of satisfaction on questions stating:

- I would recommend VBA to a friend (95% of players agreed to some degree)
- Overall, I get along with the players on other teams (94% of players agreed to some degree).
- I feel respected throughout my involvement with VBA (94% of players agreed to some degree).

Players reported slightly lower levels of satisfaction on questions stating:

- I feel encouraged to do my best by the way my coach talks to me (12% of players disagreed to some degree).
- I feel a sense of belonging at VBA (10% of players disagreed to some degree).
- I feel comfortable when Omaha Police Department officers are present at VBA (9% of players disagreed to some degree).
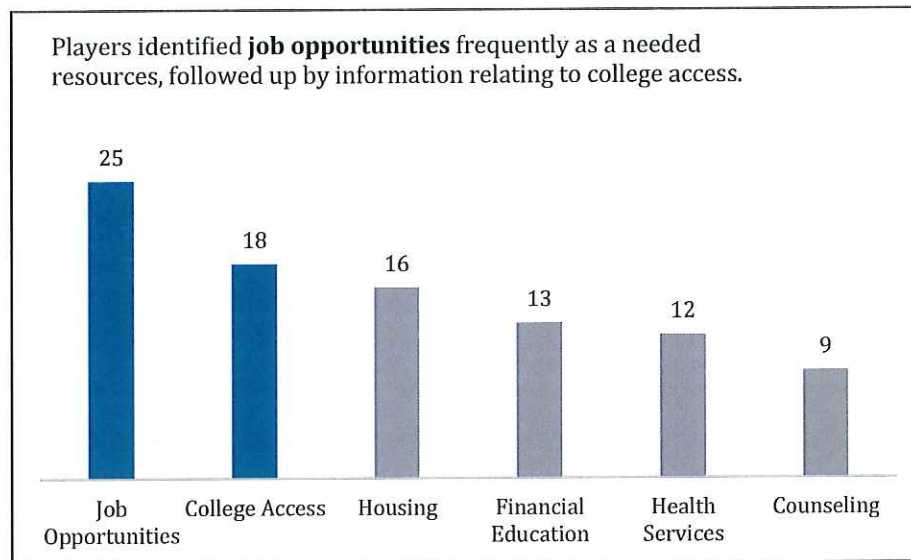
The below figure shows the responses broken out in accordance with the answers players could have chosen (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree). For several of the categories, strongly agree was the most

prominently chosen response amongst VBA players. **Participants were very satisfied overall with the league.**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would reccomend VBA to a friend.			2%	16%	29%	50%
If I had a concern, I would feel comfortable speaking with VBA staff about it.			3%	14%	36%	43%
I feel safe while participating at VBA.			5%	13%	30%	49%
I feel comfortable when Omaha Police Department officers are present at VBA.			4%	21%	34%	37%
I feel respected throughout my involvement with VBA.			2%	16%	36%	42%
Overall, I get along with the players on other teams.			4%	15%	35%	44%
Overall, I get along with the other players on my team.			4%	13%	33%	48%
I feel a sense of belonging at VBA.			5%	16%	38%	36%
I feel encouraged to do my best by the way my coach talks to me.			9%	18%	39%	30%

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ▨ Somewhat Disagree ▨ Somewhat Agree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Resources

Players were also asked to identify which type of community resources they would like to see available at the VBA games. The most popularly identified resources requested from players were job opportunities, college access, and housing.

Players identified **job opportunities** frequently as a needed resources, followed up by information relating to college access.

Category	Value
Job Opportunities	25
College Access	18
Housing	16
Financial Education	13
Health Services	12
Counseling	9

Overall Comments

When asked what players liked the <u>best</u> about VBA, many players spoke to the positive aspects of community and the environment that VBA provides them.

> *"The people involved created a very friendly competitive environment."*

> *"It's a nonviolent event that keep adults and kids out the way of an unfortunate situation."*

> *"Brings the community together."*

When asked what players would like to see <u>changed</u> in VBA next session, many players offered comments on the referees. Other thoughts expressed included having more games, more teams, and a longer session.

> *"Better selection in officiating for games. Some referees played favorite to teams."*

However, many of the players also said they had no needed changes for the next session, adding that VBA should *"keep up the good work."*

Program Strengths

After reviewing the data, STEPs assesses the following strengths of VBA:

1. VBA staff implemented effective safety measures that provided players with a general feeling of safety while participating in the program.

2. Players enjoyed their experiences with VBA, and appreciated its positive influences.

3. A majority of VBA players taking the pre and posttest surveys identified as having been involved with VBA for more than one session. A majority of players also said

they would recommend VBA to a friend, speaking again to the positivity of their experiences with VBA.

4. Pre and post outcome evaluation and satisfaction surveys data collection were well organized and timely.

Recommendations

Based on the focus group/interview analyses and survey results, we make the following recommendations to strengthen implementation and improve outcomes:

1. Build relationships between Omaha Police Department (OPD) and VBA. Provide brief training or guidelines to assist officers with successful community engagement without discomfort and tension from the players. For instance, guidelines could include interacting with the players and attendees during timeouts and halftime; introducing themselves to players, children, and attendees; and commending the young men on their basketball skills.

2. Provide a brief training to coaches prior to the session on VBA's logic model and intended program outcomes. The training can also assist with perpetuating positive male role models. (This can perhaps be accomplished via an online asynchronous format, or at coaches' meetings.)

3. Continue to facilitate ongoing and additional interaction between coaches and players. Encourage coaches to engage with their players outside of the league. Consider providing regular mini trainings or emails to support coaches with ways to positively interact with players.

4. Increase visibility of community resources so players can access them as needed. Players were most interested in learning about resources for job opportunities and college access.

In addition, we note that older players had somewhat better scores at pretest and better change scores, perhaps due to maturity. We also note that some teams had consistently less desired scores than others, however, the differences were not significant. These differences may be due to team origins and structures.

Overall, pre/posttest change scores are positive. While these quantitative changes are moderate, we are cognizant of the limited treatment dosage and duration, the context under which data was collected, and the challenges of assessing the desired outcomes.

Evaluation Methods

Qualitative data

The STEPs team completed two focus groups and one interview with first time and returning players in the VBA program. The focus groups were comprised of about five players, lasted roughly 45 minutes in length, and were completed during the same weeks as the league tournament, on the evenings of March 5 and April 2, 2017, at Hope Center.

The interview lasted around 20 minutes and was conducted on March 5, 2017. The lead program evaluator and another STEPs employee worked with Hope Center staff to prepare a script. STEPs selected and trained a facilitator to lead the focus groups and interview.

The facilitator asked VBA players questions regarding their experience with VBA. Players were asked to comment on positive experiences they had throughout VBA, interactions they had with teammates, coaches, and players, how VBA had influenced their ability to handle conflict, along with other related topic areas.

The focus groups and interview were audio recorded. Audio recordings were transcribed into text documents and analyzed by a member of the STEPs team. This coder used a grounded theory approach to analyzing the data, allowing the coder to develop a new understanding of players' experiences with VBA through listening to their own accounts. This coder also utilized open coding and constant comparison to allow common themes to emerge in response to the questions asked. Audio recordings were deleted immediately after completion of the comparison.

Quantitative data

Outcome data collection

The outcome evaluation pre-post survey was prepared in partnership between STEPs and Hope Center as part of an evaluation in 2017. We considered the program outcomes and utilized validated measurement tools to assess the outcomes for players. The intended program outcomes, along with the scales used to capture these changes in the survey are as follows:

- **Increased positive relationships.**

  Change in positive relationships was measured using a subsection of the URCAP Youth Survey Interpersonal Support Subscale (Connell, Baldwin Grossman, & Resch, 1995) which asks respondents to indicate the number of supportive adults they have met through VBA that display nine dimensions of support ("none"=0; "only 1"=1; "2 or 3"=2; and "more than 3"=3). <u>An increase in scores indicates the respondents had more supportive adult relationships.</u>

- **Increased positive social skills.**

  We utilized the Attitude toward Conflict scale to measure the change in positive social skills (Dahlberg et al., 2005). The eight-item Likert scale assessed respondents' attitude about the use of violence to resolve conflict. Scores were summed, producing a possible range of 8 to 32 points. <u>Higher scores indicate more acceptance of violence. Therefore, a decrease from pre to posttest represents a desirable outcome.</u>

- **Improved attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement.**

  Change in attitudes and beliefs about gang involvement was assessed using a slightly revised version of the Attitude toward Gangs scale (Dahlberg et al., 2005). STEPs and Hope Center decided to remove the "I will probably join a gang" item as

to not offend or discourage players from filling out the survey truthfully. Players were asked to assess whether eight statements about gangs were true or not true for them. After reversing scores for items 5, 6, and 7, the totals were summed. <u>Higher scores indicated a higher affinity for or acceptance of gangs. Therefore, a decrease in scores indicated a positive outcome.</u>

Hope Center staff administered the surveys to players at the beginning and end of the VBA session. Of the 94 players who completed a pretest, 82 players also completed a posttest. When matching pre and posttest scores, 72 matching survey sets could be analyzed by the STEPs team.

Process data collection

Players' levels of satisfaction were assessed through a survey administered at the end of the session consisting of scale items (6-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and open-ended questions. The questions assessed players' satisfaction with safety/the environment, relationships, and overall experience with the program. The satisfaction survey was completed by 83 players at the end of the VBA program. All data from the surveys were entered into a database by Hope Center staff and analyzed by the STEPs team.

Limitations

1. Over 20 of the satisfaction survey responses received were identifiable. These players voluntarily chose to include their name and contact information on the survey in order to obtain resources or learn more information about becoming a referee.

2. Different from previous evaluations of VBA and Jr. VBA, STEPs did not make program observations this time. Recommendations were made based on qualitative and quantitative data, and our previous knowledge of the program.

3. All data collection, except for the focus groups and interview, was done by VBA staff rather than STEPs. This may or may not have affected players' responses.

4. Qualitative data gathered was not as rich as hoped. Not all players had prior knowledge they would be invited to participate in a focus group. Most players' responses were light-hearted and did not evidence much insight. When the first interview did not elicit much helpful information, a second focus group was formed in exchange for more interviews. Also, the script was changed slightly for the second focus group to allow more time for rapport-building and to elicit more response on our question about law enforcement presence.

5. To save costs, qualitative data was analyzed by only one staff member. However, a carefully selected and trained facilitator along with audio recordings and transcription of the sessions strengthened this analysis.

References

Dahlberg, L. L., Toal, S. B., Swahn, M., & Behrens, C. B. (2005). *Measuring violence-related attitudes, behaviors, and influences among youth: A compendium of assessment tools* (2nd ed.). Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention.

Connell, J. P., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. (1995). The urban assessment package (URCAP) Manual. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Hope Center for Kids ◆ Village Basketball Alliance
Login Model

Social problem: Neighborhood violence, resulting from gang activity, creates divisions between young men in the North Omaha community and results in the possibility of conflicts and lack of sense of safety in the community.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
• Staff, including paid security and refereesCoaches • Volunteers • Funding (organization funding, Office of Violence Prevention grant) • Omaha facility (small gym, Hope Skate gym) • Jerseys • Basketball equipment • Traveling trophy	• Hold 2-3 VBA sessions per year, with 8-10 weeks of games per session • Recruit and train coaches and referees • Hold a pre-session meeting with coaches and referees • Provide oversight to team structure and rules • Facilitate Community Resource Nights • Hold Celebration Nights	• # of teams • # of players • # of games • # of spectators at games • # of community partners providing resources	Each player will: • Develop and strengthen healthy social skills, including teamwork, communication, following instructions, and competitive sportsmanship • Form and strengthen positive relationships with adults and other league participants in which they experience support, care, and security, and feel a strong bond • Have knowledge of and connection to additional community organizations and resources (employment, financial, etc.)	VBA alumni: • Engage positively with the community • Continue to engage with opportunities at Hope, referee for Jr. VBA, and serve as role models

Impact: Strong community relations and reduced community violence.

Collaborating Partners: Douglas County sheriff's office, Empowerment Network/Omaha 360; Nebraska Crime Commission and the Office of Violence Prevention; YouTurn, Metro Area Youth Services (MAYS), and other organizations who bring teams.

External Factors:
Positive – Family support, churches, other community programs in which players participate, new employment opportunities.
Negative – Poverty, unemployment rates, crime rates, gang activity, limited transportation, incarceration of family members.

THE HOPE

Appendices

Focus Groups: Script

This focus group will take 60-90 minutes. The purpose of this group is to let Hope Center know what is and isn't working well with the VBA program. We want to hear from you so VBA can continue to be offered in the future.

We first have a couple of ground rules to talk with you about. We ask that you not discuss the information shared in this group with others. Of course, we can't enforce this, but hope that you will respect each other's privacy and not discuss the contents of this group outside this room. We want this to be a safe space where you can share your honest thoughts and feelings.

We will be recording the sessions. These recordings will be reviewed by evaluators (outside of Hope Center) for key themes discussed throughout this conversation. Once they have reviewed and captured the themes, the recordings will be deleted.

Lastly, but most importantly, your names or organizational affiliations will not be linked to your responses. No VBA coaches or Hope Center staff will know what you say directly but instead the evaluators will compile your responses into one overall report. Again, we will not link your responses to your name. All efforts to maintain anonymity will be taken when reporting back to Hope Center. We say this with one exception... If you say anything that indicates a high risk of harm to yourself or others, we will need to notify the authorities and Hope Center staff.

Do you have any questions prior to beginning the group?

Introductions: Please state your <u>first name</u>, along with your <u>favorite basketball team or player</u>?

1. How long have you been involved with VBA?
2. What positive experiences has VBA provided you?
    What aspects keep you coming back to play session after session?
3. Throughout VBA, describe your interactions with:
    a. teammates
    b. opposing team players
    c. coaches
    d. OPD gang unit *[removed for 2nd focus group]*
4. How do you interact with teammates and players when you see them outside of VBA?
5. Describe any positive supports or relationships you have gained as a result of participating in VBA.
6. How has VBA influenced your ability to handle conflict?
7. I understand that the OPD gang unit stops by occasionally at VBA games. What do you think about that? Do you think VBA should have more or less security? *[added for 2nd focus group]*
8. How does community violence impact VBA? What role does VBA serve in the community?
9. What would you say to a friend considering playing in VBA?
    Would you recommend it? Why or why not?

Are there any comments you would like to share that would enhance your experience with VBA?

Thank you!

Interviews

This interview will take 45-60 minutes. The purpose of this group is to let Hope Center know what is and isn't working well with the VBA program. We want to hear from you so VBA can continue to be offered in the future.

I will be recording this interview. The recording will be reviewed by evaluators (outside of Hope Center) for key themes discussed throughout this conversation. Once they have reviewed and captured the themes, the recordings will be deleted.

Your name or organizational affiliations will not be linked to your responses. No VBA coaches or Hope Center staff will know what you say directly but instead the evaluators will compile your responses into one overall report. I want this to be a safe space where you can share your honest thoughts and feelings. Again, we will not link your responses to your name. All efforts to maintain anonymity will be taken when reporting back to Hope Center. We say this with one exception... If you say anything that indicates a high risk of harm to yourself or others, we will need to notify the authorities and Hope Center staff.

Do you have any questions prior to beginning the group?

Introductions
1. The overall goals of VBA are for each player to develop and strengthen healthy social skills, experience positive relationships, and experience safety and security during league play. To what degree do you think those goals are being met?
2. How long have you been involved with VBA?
3. How/why did you get started playing in VBA?
4. How has VBA impacted your life both on and off the court?
   What positive changes have you seen in yourself as a result of VBA involvement?
5. How has VBA influenced how you communicate with others both on and off the court?
   How has VBA participation influenced how you handle conflict?
6. How do you interact with teammates and players when you see them outside of VBA?
7. Describe any positive supports or relationships you have gained as a result of participating in VBA.
8. How has community violence impacted you? And what role does VBA play in this?
9. How has your involvement with VBA changed your perception of gangs? Your perception of the OPD Gang Unit?
10. In your opinion, what are the best aspects of VBA? What could be enhanced?

Are there any additional comments you would like to share regarding your experience with VBA?

Thank you!

Instructions: Please answer all questions honestly. Your answers will remain anonymous. The information you provide is important to help the Hope Center improve the VBA program.

Of the adults you spend time with, how many:	None	Only 1	2 or 3	More than 3
1. Could you go to for advice regarding health concerns?				
2. Pay attention to what's going on in your life?				
3. Could you go to for help getting a job?				
4. Get on your case when you mess up?				
5. Praise you when you do something good?				
6. Could you go to for help in an emergency?				
7. Could you go to if you need some advice about something personal like a problem with a partner or spouse?				
8. Could you go to if you thought you were in danger?				
9. Could you go to if you were really upset or mad about something?				

- -

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
10. If I'm mad at someone I just ignore them.				
11. Even if other people would think I'm weird I would try to stop a fight.				
12. It's O.K. for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want.				
13. Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight.				
14. When my friends fight I try to get them to stop.				
15. There are better ways to solve problems than fighting.				
16. I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting.				
17. If people do something to make me really mad, they deserve to be beaten up.				
18. If people do something to make me really mad, it's ok to use foul language.				

TURN OVER →

	Not True for Me	True for Me
19. I think you are safer, and have protection, if you join a gang.		
20. Some of my friends belong to gangs.		
21. I think it's cool to be in a gang.		
22. My friends would think less of me if I joined a gang.		
23. I believe it is dangerous to join a gang; you will probably end up getting hurt or killed if you belong to a gang.		
24. I think being in a gang makes it more likely that you will get into trouble.		
25. Some people in my family belong to a gang, or used to belong to a gang.		

26. Have you participated in a previous VBA session? (circle one)	yes | no
27. In what zip code do you live?	_____
28. How old are you?	_____
29. What is your race/ethnicity? (circle one)	Black or African American | Hispanic/Latino | Asian/Pacific Islander | White | African | Native American | Multi/Bi-racial | Other: _____
30. What is your current academic status? (circle one)	not in school | in high school | in a 2-year/community college or trade school | in a 4-year college
31. What is your current employment status? (circle one)	not employed | employed part-time | employed full-time

Thank you!

VBA Satisfaction Survey

Directions: Please respond openly and honestly.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel encouraged to do my best by the way my coach talks to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I feel a sense of belonging at VBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Overall, I get along with the other players on <u>my team.</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Overall, I get along with the players on other teams.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel respected throughout my involvement with VBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I feel comfortable when Omaha Police Department officers are present at VBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. I feel safe while participating at VBA.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. If I had a concern, I would feel comfortable speaking with VBA staff about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I would recommend VBA to a friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6

10. What did you like **the best** about VBA?

_____

_____

_____

11. What would you like to see changed in VBA next session?

_____

_____

_____

12. What community resources would you like to receive more information about? (Check all that apply)

☐ Health Services ☐ Financial Education ☐ Job Opportunities ☐ Housing ☐ Counseling

☐ College Access ☐ Other: _____

    If you would like more information about the resources you selected above, please provide your:

    Name: _____ Email: _____

13. If you are interested in becoming a referee for Jr VBA, please provide your:

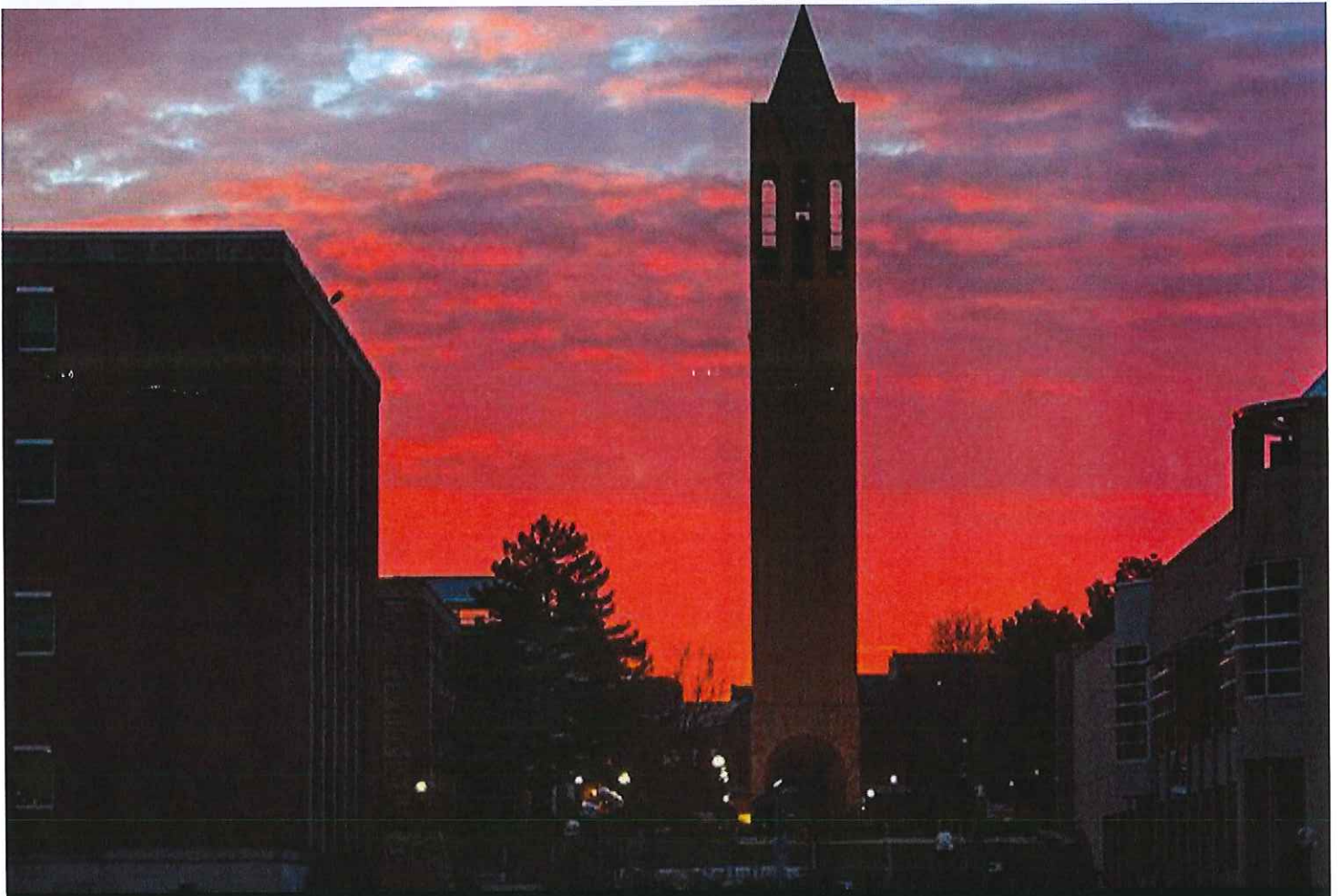Name: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

THANK YOU! YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO US!

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

Omaha Police Department Intelligence Tracking System

Evaluation Report

Submitted by Dr. Justin Nix and Dr. Gaylene Armstrong

SCHOOL OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Nebraska UNIVERSITY OF
Omaha

Omaha Police Department Intelligence Tracking System

Evaluation Report

Table of Contents

Scope of Project

The primary goal of the Web-based Gang Database Project was to develop the new Omaha Police Department (OPD) Intelligence Tracking System (ITS). Building upon the legacy system, the ITS aims to provide enhanced access, support, and intelligence to OPD officers and other approved criminal justice agencies (e.g., Douglas County Corrections, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services) with the broader goal of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of violence reduction efforts in the Greater Omaha area. The intelligence information targeted by the ITS pertains to individuals and incidents of interest to law enforcement officials in clearing criminal cases and in the prevention of new criminal activity.

Priorities of this project included:

- Modifying the legacy system data structure resulting in an improved understanding of relationships and associations between individuals of interest,
- Improving access to the ITS database by OPD officers who are located onsite in OPD facilities and remote locations,
- Enabling secure web-based access to the ITS by individuals within approved agencies,
- Encouraging the increased utilization of the ITS both internal and external to OPD,
- Enhancing the dissemination of the existing intelligence to approved individuals and agencies.

This report summarizes the documentation and assessment of the project goals achieved by OPD staff under the leadership of Mr. David Van Dyke, as well as provides a foundational knowledge of recent trends in the scientific literature regarding law enforcement violence reduction intervention efforts. The UNO SCCJ research team included Drs. Justin Nix and Gaylene Armstrong. The team prioritized three areas as outlined in this report: (1) process evaluation and documentation of ITS implementation processes allowing for benchmarking of activities and key tasks; (2) preparation of a recommended end-user satisfaction survey recommended for dissemination upon full ITS implementation including secure remote access by external agencies; and, (3) review, assessment and summary of scientific literature regarding new trends and promising interventions that will serve to support the efforts of the ITS staff and the OPD Gang Unit.

1. Process Evaluation and Development of Performance Measure Benchmarks

Researchers engaged in a process evaluation that relied upon a document analysis of relevant ITS development materials, stakeholder interviews with individuals internal and external to OPD, and observation of the ITS operation. Resulting from these efforts is the identification of challenges that existed prior to the development of the ITS within the legacy system, and a description of the resolution to these barriers based on the work of OPD staff led by Mr. Van Dyke. Finally, based on discussion with stakeholders and observation of the ITS, researchers have identified a subset of suggested indicators that could be used to benchmark ITS utilization and performance (i.e., performance measures), as well as hold the potential for a pre and post implementation comparison of system impact within OPD. Once the ITS is fully implemented and available to external criminal justice agency partners, OPD may also elect to utilize these performance measures as sustainable benchmarks for annual reports.

A. Identification of Challenges to Law Enforcement with the OPD Legacy System

The preexisting OPD database structure housing intelligence information (hereafter referred to as the "legacy system") created a number of challenges that inhibited the efficiency and effectiveness of violence prevention efforts. Mr. Van Dyke in consultation with OPD administrative staff identified these challenges.

1. The legacy system structure did not allow for appropriate analysis and assessment between individual linkages (i.e., networks), which reduced the efficiency of OPD intelligence-led policing.

2. The legacy system structure resulted in the creation of redundant entries of intelligence data.

The legacy system utilized an individual-centric data structure to document and track individuals and incidents of interest to law enforcement officials including suspected of gang involved criminal activity. As such, any intelligence event (i.e., observation or activity) was tracked by individual rather than using a hierarchy of an event or group structure. As a result, a single event where multiple individuals were present produced repeated entries in the legacy system (i.e., multiple records were created).

3. The legacy system focused on individuals, not incidents or events. This approach is incongruent with the workflow of the gang unit and OPD uniform patrol.

Stakeholders indicated that officers were required to complete multiple Gang Tracking Forms (GTF) to establish the presence of multiple individuals at an event of interest. The GTFs aligned with the legacy system data entry such that GTFs were individually based, not observation based. The inefficiency of this administrative approach deters officers from completing GTFs due to the required time investment, in turn, negatively impacting the quantity and quality of intelligence that officers report.

4. The records management system and legacy system were neither connected, nor integrated.

To obtain complete information about an individual contained in the legacy system, users would be required to access two distinct database systems. The duplicative effort required was inefficient and reduced officer effectiveness.

5. Non-gang unit cruisers cannot access the legacy system off-site.

When involved in critical, and potentially volatile, encounters in our communities, OPD officers are unable to access the legacy system. Instead, officers would need to return to the office to access and review important intelligence. This is inefficient and ineffective approach to usage and may reduce levels of officer safety while in our communities.

6. The legacy system reduces (limits) OPD's ability to share information with other agencies.

A manual transfer of data within the legacy system must occur with each end user. As a result, approved external criminal justice agencies were reliant upon monthly manual updates. This is an inefficient process as important intelligence could be unavailable to law enforcement and other officials when critically relevant.

7. The legacy system operates on a dated platform as compared to other agencies rendering data provided inaccessible to higher operating systems.

Stakeholder perception indicated that other agencies cannot easily provide intelligence due to the dated nature of the legacy system; consequently, intelligence information that could be gathered, especially from jails and prisons, may not have been obtained.

B. Resolutions resulting from the Creation and Implementation of the OPD Intelligence Tracking System

This project transferred data from the legacy system, specifically targeted an improved data structure, and resulted in the new OPD ITS (hereafter referred to as the "ITS"). The ITS is a hierarchical system that structures data by individuals *within* events or observations in contrast to the earlier system of events within individuals. In the ITS, a single observation can account for both an individual's involvement (i.e., presence), and where appropriate, the involvement of multiple individuals in that same event.

The process of analyzing data that existed in the legacy system, creating extensive code that underlies the ITS, and cleaning the data after transferred to the ITS was an extremely time consuming and labor intensive effort undertaken by Mr. Van Dyke and his team. Along with the creation of the ITS, the technical support team designed a database form, search link functionality, and an interface that will facilitate approved criminal justice agency end user access to the ITS.

The final step in process is the implementation to allow for secure access by approved external criminal justice agencies. It was very clear that this information is critical for a range of area criminal justice agencies including the Douglas County Jail and the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. External agencies, particularly those in the correctional area, have used the legacy system on a regular basis. Interviewees clearly stated the value of the legacy system as a tool that provides additional intelligence to inform housing decisions for individuals confined in their correctional facilities. Data contained in the ITS may also assist in contextualizing and preventing disturbances in those same correctional facilities. The roll out and full implementation of the ITS will serve to further bolster violence prevention in these institutional correctional settings.

A number of observable improvements stemmed from the ITS as a result of the extensive efforts of the technical team. Based on discussion and observation of the ITS, a few of the key points of improvement include:

1. The ITS allows for inter-individual linkages using intelligence gathered including multiple gang associations.

2. The revised hierarchical structure of the data allows for more efficient data entry into the ITS and eliminates redundancy of record entries. This improved efficiency will increase the probability that individuals will be inclined to appropriately document incidents and observations due to the reduced workload and demands on time.

3. The intelligence reporting structure in ITS is now congruent with the workflow of the OPD including members of the gang unit who interact at an incident level. Law enforcement officials typically are engaged in interactions, observations and responses to incidents where multiple individuals are present.

4. The events in the ITS are indexed by date allowing for various time dependent assessment of intelligence through the search link functionality. As such, the ITS improves the temporal accuracy of an individual's activities and criminal involvement.

5. The ITS improves tracking of an individual's associations over time providing improved historical accuracy regarding gang associations as well as an indication of involvement in multiple gangs.

6. The functionality of the link analysis provided in ITS allows for concurrent access to information from the records management system as well as intelligence input and will greatly contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of OPD investigative matters.

7. The web based functionality of the ITS will address the multiple barriers that previously existed for both OPD officers as well as for external criminal justice agencies who have been granted approval to access the ITS.

C. Suggested Performance Measures for Benchmarking

An underlying need in the months ahead is the creation of a critical feedback loop to further ensure that high quality of intelligence remains available through the OPD ITS. The feedback loop includes end-users of the ITS, the OPD unit responsible for the quality assurance of intelligence information, the OPD staff responsible for technical aspects of the ITS, and individuals who have the opportunity to share intelligence for entry into the ITS.

For optimal usage, the ITS must have high quality intelligence of sufficient quantity and quality (i.e., depth and breadth of data) such that end users continue to perceive the ITS as a valuable investigatory tool. The quality of the intelligence is influenced by the improved functionality and reporting capabilities that now exists due to the development and accessibility of the ITS. The next step is to ensure continued submission of new, timely, and relevant intelligence to the OPD. The OPD must underscore the importance of the ITS to internal and external stakeholder agencies. To demonstrate the importance of the ITS, consider sharing ITS utilization rates with those individuals responsible to submitting information to the ITS (i.e., individual officers within the Uniform Patrol Bureau).

The rate of ITS utilization is a key performance measure and will be critical in establishing the following essential feedback loop. For example, officers in the Uniform Patrol Division who are provided with the knowledge regarding the value of their submissions in enhancing the quantity and quality of intelligence contained in the system may lead to further improvement in usage and dissemination of knowledge within law enforcement and correctional agencies.
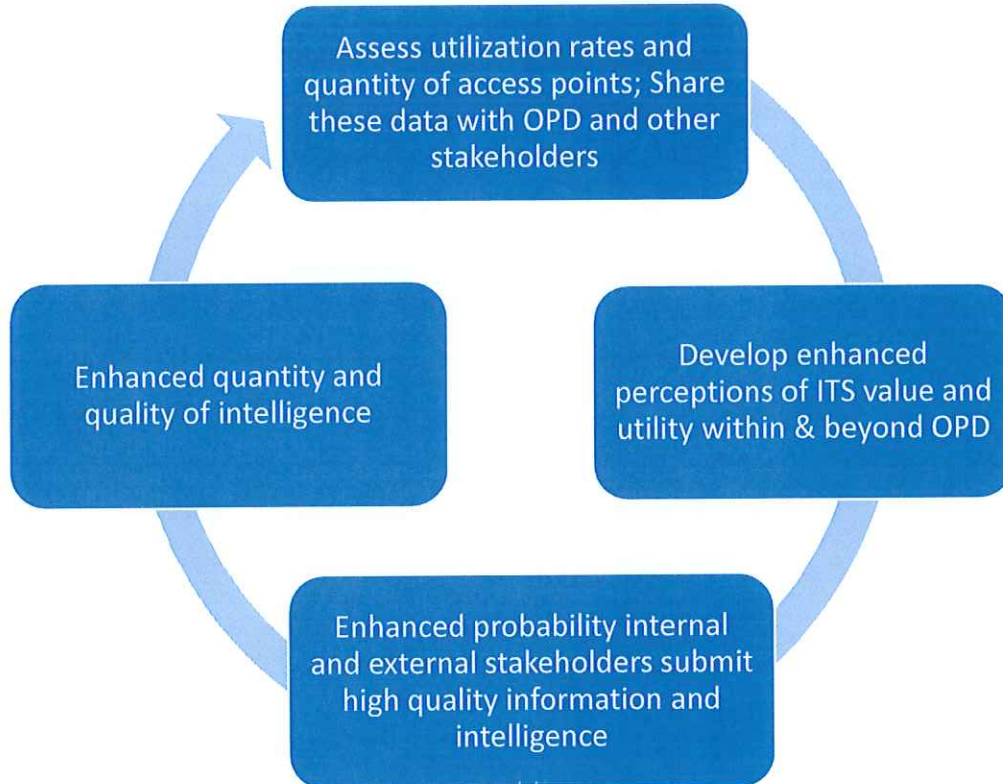
Other indicators to consider as performance measures:

Performance measure #1: Quantity of inputs into the ITS

Performance measure #2: Quality of intelligence submissions as measured by the percentage of intelligence submissions that result in ITS entry

Performance measure #3: Modality of intelligence that results in an ITS entry
1) Field Observation Card (FO Card) - contact that does not result in arrest (no criminal activity)
2) Information Report (criminal activity possible) – cross referenced for gang involvement
3) Gang Tracking form (GTF) – Supplemental form completed with suspected gang activity
4) External agency submission

Performance measure #4: Number of ITS access points by OPD officers

Performance measure #5: Number of ITS access points by external agencies

Performance measure #6: Number of individuals/agencies trained for remote access to ITS

2. Implementation End-User Satisfaction Survey

Researchers determined an appropriate, validated end-user satisfaction survey that may be administered upon full implementation of the web-based ITS with internal and external stakeholders. As the ITS is fully implemented within the OPD and extended to identified criminal justice agencies for use with secure access, it will be important to conduct an end-user satisfaction survey.

An end-user survey will have the ability to identify the usability of the system as perceived by the end user, and identify any barriers in utilization or understanding of the system from the perspective of external stakeholders. Ensuring that utilization barriers are minimized based on this feedback, the likelihood that external agencies will both submit intelligence to the OPD and extract information from the system is enhanced. End user satisfaction is deemed to be one of three critical aspects of final determination of system usability when on boarding systems particularly with smart phone or remotely accessed applications and systems (see Brooke, 2018):

1. Effectiveness (the ability of users to complete tasks using the system, and the quality of the output of those tasks),
2. Efficiency (the level of resource consumed in performing tasks),
3. **Satisfaction (users' subjective reactions to using the system).**

One example of a simple end-user satisfaction survey that would be easy to administer and simple to score is the validated System Usability Scale (SUS). The SUS is a simple, ten-item scale giving a global view of subjective assessments of usability. As paraphrased from the work of Brooke (n.d.), the SUS uses a *Likert scale* where a statement is made and the respondent then indicates the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement on a 5 (or 7) point scale. The respondent is presented with statements that indicate agreement and disagreement and aim to extreme expressions of the attitude being captured.

Validation of the SUS included assembling a larger set of 50 potential questions and conducting a controlled scientific validation process. The items leading to the most extreme responses from the original pool were then selected for analysis. Inter-correlations between all of the selected items were high ($\pm$ 0.7 to $\pm$ 0.9). In addition, items were selected so that the common response to half of them was strong agreement, and to the other half, strong disagreement. This approach prevents respondent response biases and requires respondents to think about each statement and determine whether they agree or disagree. Selected statements actually cover a variety of aspects of system usability including the need for support, training, and complexity.

The SU scale is typically administered after the respondent has had an opportunity to use the new system, but before any debriefing or discussion takes place. Respondents should record their immediate response to each item, rather than thinking about items for a long time. All items should be completed. If a respondent feels that they cannot respond to a particular item, they should mark the center point of the scale. SUS yields a single number representing a composite measure of the overall usability of the system being studied. Note that scores for individual items are not meaningful on their own but should be examined in comparison to other respondents.

To calculate the SUS score, first sum the score contributions from each item. Each item's score contribution will range from 0 to 4. For items 1,3,5,7, and 9, the score contribution is the scale position minus 1. For items 2,4,6,8 and 10, the contribution is 5 minus the scale position. Multiply the sum of the scores by 2.5 to obtain the overall value of SU. SUS scores have a range of 0 to 100.

SUS has been made freely available for use in usability assessment, and has been used for a variety of research projects and industrial evaluations; the only prerequisite for its use is that any published report should acknowledge the source of the measure.

System Usability Scale, © Digital Equipment Corporation, 1986.

Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

1. I think that I would like to use this system frequently.

	1	2	3	4	5

2. I found the system unnecessarily complex.

	1	2	3	4	5

3. I thought the system was easy to use.

	1	2	3	4	5

4. I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this system.

	1	2	3	4	5

5. I found the various functions in this system were well integrated.

	1	2	3	4	5

6. I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system.

	1	2	3	4	5

7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly.

	1	2	3	4	5

8. I found the system very cumbersome to use.

	1	2	3	4	5

9. I felt very confident using the system.

	1	2	3	4	5

10. I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with the system.

	1	2	3	4	5

An example of a scored SU scale:

<div>
Strongly disagree   Strongly agree
</div>

1. I think that I would like to use this system frequently

     1   2   3   4   5 ✓   **4**

2. I found the system unnecessarily complex

     1   2   3   4 ✓   5   **1**

3. I thought the system was easy to use

     1   2 ✓   3   4   5   **1**

4. I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this system

     1 ✓   2   3   4   5   **4**

5. I found the various functions in this system were well integrated

     1   2 ✓   3   4   5   **1**

6. I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system

     1   2   3 ✓   4   5   **2**

7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly

     1   2 ✓   3   4   5   **1**

8. I found the system very cumbersome to use

     1   2   3   4 ✓   5   **1**

9. I felt very confident using the system

     1   2   3   4   5 ✓   **4**

10. I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this system

     1   2 ✓   3   4   5   **3**

Total score = 22
SUS Score = 22 *22.5 = 55

3. Briefing on Scientific Literature: Future Considerations

A final stage of this report consists the presentation of two summaries of established scientific literature. The first summary provides background information based on recent literature detailing the trend toward increased gang member usage of social media for criminal purposes. The second brief targets a literature focused upon promising gang intervention practices. Both of these briefs will be utilized to support the Gang Unit crime suppression efforts that in turn affected the operation of the ITS established herein.

A. Social media enhanced intervention in violent neighborhoods: Using ITS to reduce violence and drug activity through inclusion of social media indicators

Social media applications and online platforms originally created for prosocial engagement transcend *geographical location.* These same applications and platforms are increasingly used to facilitate urban-based youth violence within communities, both in schools and on the streets. Studies find youth violence, including bullying, gang violence, and self-directed violence, increasingly occurs in the online space[1]. In schools, the prevalence of cyberbullying ranging from targeted harassment of peers to violent and terroristic threats that require law enforcement intervention using online platforms is rising. In some jurisdictions, gang members use social media to plan and engage in criminal activities, incite violence, and support local substance use and distribution.

Here we present some key findings from the scientific literature that support the consideration of including social media indicators in the future into the ITS. We base this recommendation on a relatively new trend among youth (ages 12-24) living in violent urban neighborhoods (e.g., Chicago). Specifically, the high utilization rates of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snap Chat to brag about violence, make threats, and recruit gang members. Youth use the sites to plan criminal activity, known as Internet banging[2] and to incite violence within communities by taunting rival gangs, posturing and boasting about violent events.

Researchers note the Internet has changed the opportunity structure for crime and deviance, much as it has changed other aspects of social life[3]. Scientific evidence documents the accompanying movement of offending and victimization to the Internet along with the expansion of deviant groups—including gangs—into online settings. Pyrooz and colleagues gathered data in five cities from 585 respondents, including 418 current and former gang members concluding: (a) gang members use the Internet and social networking sites as much, if not more, than their non-gang counterparts, (b) gang members have a greater overall propensity for online crime and deviance than former and non-gang respondents. Although they found the Internet was more commonly used for symbolic purposes than instrumental (monetary) gain, other researchers disagree.

Specific to urban areas including Omaha are the following early trends documented through researcher-agency partner evaluations:

1. Social media is being used to incite violence and support substance use and distribution:

Researchers analyzed 8.5 million Detroit gang members' tweets from January 2013 to March 2014 to assess whether they contained Internet banging–related keywords[4]. They found that 4.7% of gang-affiliated

---

[1] Patton, Hong, Ranney, Patel, Kelley, Eschmann, and Washington (2014)
[2] Patton, Eschmann, Elsaesser, and Bocanegra, 2016
[3] Pyrooz, Decker, and Moule, 2015
[4] Patton, Patel, Hong, Ranney, Crandall, and Dungy, 2017

user tweets consisted of terms related to violence and crime. Violence and crime-related communications fell into 4 main categories: (a) beefing (267,221 tweets), (b) grief (79,971 tweets), (c) guns (3,551 tweets), and (d) substance use and distribution (47,638 tweets). Patterns in violent and criminal communication that may be helpful in predicting future gang activities were identified, which has implications for violence prevention research, practice, and policy.

2. Social media is being used to organize random and spontaneous violence through "flash gangs[5]":

Flash mobs, an event in which a group of people are organized via some form of telecommunications, assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual and sometimes seemingly pointless act for a brief time, and then disperse. A recent phenomenon synthesizes the activity of flash mobs and street gangs. Communities everywhere have experienced the negative effects of street gangs, and their proliferation has led to an increase in destructive crimes in the United States.

A flash gang is a group that uses a social media connection to invite participants to a time and location where they commit a crime and then they split up. Local law enforcement needs to examine response policies to prepare for this new and dangerous phenomenon. Recent protests in the Middle East and North Africa were coordinated using similar strategies, spotlighting the power of using social media technology to oppose government action. The spontaneity and secrecy of the flash mob combined with the targeted crime and/or violence of the street gang produces a mix that is hard to combat even with inside intelligence. The instant access and extended reach of mobile phones and social media sites like Twitter and Facebook bring a twist that makes the spontaneous volatility even more difficult to prevent.

3. Social media examples of "internet banging" has resulted in serious injury and homicide[6]:

A recent case study in Chicago focused on the extent to which social media utilization tracks with real-time events, particularly regarding violence among urban gang-involved youth. The study noted the importance of social media in connecting youth in a shared experience that may incite violence. Researchers found that urban gang-involved youth use social media to "brag and insult and make threats a concept known as Internet banging." When social media is used in this manner, it was found to incite violence in the targeted Chicago neighborhood. As the authors note, they specifically analyzed the "Twitter communications of one known female gang member, Gakirah Barnes, during a two week window in which her friend was killed and then weeks later, she was also killed". The researchers found street culture is translated online through the conventions of social media including Twitter, sometimes online in real time.

4. Considerations pertaining to gang related intervention efforts:

Reduction of gang-related violence and related activity (i.e., opioid and auto theft) through enhanced, place-based violence intervention efforts could be improved through monitoring of social media accounts and incorporation of this information in the ITS. Specifically, culturally informed, social media enhanced teamwork tracking individuals residing in violent neighborhoods, gang involved youth and those youth who are high-risk for gang recruitment efforts in their local communities could be included in this effort.

Concrete steps to consider this expansion would include:
1. Defining/identifying at-risk communities
   a. Use place-based crime rates, community demographics

[5] Smith, Rush, Robinson, and Karmiller, (2012)
[6] Patton, Lane, Leonard, Macbeth, and Smith Lee (2017)

    b. Assess neighborhood risk factors (crime creep, transient population, increasing immigrant populations that may lead to future turf conflicts, shift in drug patterns – increasing opioids)

    c. Identify parallel efforts determined to be added resources for collaboration (advisory board members)

2. Identify a *specific* violence reduction intervention

3. Continue to engage in education and intervention efforts within the community
    a. Expand upon violence intervention outreach workers who connect with youth and work with schools (i.e., after school programs and curricular development)
    b. Consider encouraging report through a "See it, snap it, send it campaign" to a dedicated text line at the Omaha Police Department

4. Continue to enhanced capacity within the Omaha Police Department to allow for social media enhance intelligence gathering
    a. Include training on analytics within social media
    b. Purchase appropriate technology and tools
    c. Include sustainable changes to enhance OPD ITS to account for social media related intelligence

B. Promising Practices for Gang Intervention: A Brief Review

The gang and/or violence intervention strategies that experience the strongest scientific support in crime reduction effects tend to be very specific in nature, as opposed to having a general focus in the community. Effective interventions are either place-based, offender-based, or both. Importantly, they are proactive using a data-driven approach, as opposed to reactive (Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011).

Research has consistently shown that the majority of crime and citizen calls for service cluster in relatively small "hot spots" (Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989). It follows that agencies should maximize resources allocation, such as having officers spend extra time, in these areas. When resources are maximized in this manner, substantial reductions in crime and disorder are typically achieved (Braga, Papachristos, & Hureau, 2014; Sherman & Weisburd, 1995). Despite warranted concern over such practices displacing crime to other nearby areas, studies generally find little to no evidence of a displacement phenomenon. In fact, studies often reveal a "diffusion of benefits," whereby the areas immediately surrounding a targeted area also experience decreases in crime and disorder (Clarke & Weisburd, 1994).

Likewise, research tells us that a small percentage of the population typically accounts for the vast majority of violent crime (Wolfgang, Thornberry, & Figlio, 1987). Identifying the individuals in the community who are responsible for a disproportionate share of violence is an important first step for agencies as they seek to reduce violence. One promising approach is to utilize social network analysis to uncover relationships between offenders and victims (Sierra-Arevalo & Papachristos, 2015). Papachristos et al. (2012), for example, estimated that 85% of all gunshot victims in a Boston community belonged to a single network of gang members who comprised less than 5% of the community's population.

The critical question is what police should do upon identifying hot spots and/or chronic offenders in their community. In other words, what policing tactics are most *effective* at reducing crime? Police departments are increasingly thinking outside the box—addressing problems that not traditionally considered as a part of law enforcement responsibility (Goldstein, 1990). By addressing underlying criminogenic problems,

whatever they may be, proactive policing efforts hold significant potential for long-term crime reductions. The Los Angeles Police Department demonstrated one early example of this type of effective crime reduction approach.

In the early 1990s, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) devised a simple but effective approach to reducing drive-by shootings. Using an intelligence lead policing approach, the department determined over 80% of drive-by shootings in their jurisdiction occurred on residential streets at the periphery of the community. In response to this critical issue, the LAPD attempted to reduce the drive-by shootings by installing traffic barriers in several locations. The traffic barriers aimed to prevent vehicular access without impeding pedestrian traffic. The department also assigned 15 officers to patrol the areas – removing signs of disorder (Kelling & Coles, 1996), getting to know residents, and forming block clubs. This proactive organizational response resulted a significant reduction in drive-by shootings and other predatory crimes, an increase in attendance at the local high school, and decreased fear of crime among residents. Unfortunately, the barriers were badly damaged after two years. As a result, the barriers were no longer effective in preventing the traffic pattern from recurring (Lasley, 1996).

In this next section, we summarize a number of evidence-informed intervention strategies utilized by police departments across that nation that may serve to bolster the gang and violence reduction efforts of the Omaha Police Department.

1. *Promising Strategy – Summary of Operation Cul-de-Sac, Los Angeles, CA*

Lasley, J. R. (1996). Using traffic barriers to "design out" crime: A program evaluation of LAPD's Operation Cul-De-Sac. *Report to the National Institute of Justice. Fullerton, CA: California State University.*

Overview:

This report is a program analysis of Operation Cul-de-Sac (OCDS). OCDS was implemented in 1990 by the Los Angeles Police Department and involved the closure of 14 streets with permanent traffic barriers within a South-Central Los Angeles community deemed the "most dangerous" for gang crime in the entire City. The program was primarily constructed to "design out" drive-by shootings taking place between rival gangs who frequented this community.

Key Points:

- Overall crime reductions in the OCDS program area for predatory crimes (including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault and purse snatch) and property crimes (burglary, grand theft, auto theft, burglary from auto, theft from auto, theft from persons, bike theft and other theft) decreased approximately 20% during the first year of OCDS program operation (1990)
- *Murder & drive by shootings:*
  - *General Program Effects* – The incidence of drive-by shootings (using murder as a proxy measure) and murder appear to have been reduced significantly by the introduction of traffic barriers
  - *Displacement Effects* – No displacement effect for murders (and drive-by shootings) was discovered. Evidence suggests that the traffic barriers may have resulted in "positive displacement": a reduction in murder within patrol areas surrounding the OCDS program area
  - *Adaptation Effects* - There was no evidence of criminal adaptation to the traffic barriers with respect to murder, because murder remained low for the entire two-year active OCDS program period

- Predatory crimes dropped approximately 8% the first year and 37% the second year the traffic barriers were in place, compared to the year before (1989) OCDS began
- Property crime decreased substantially during the first year that the traffic barriers were in place (approximately 31%)
- Interviews with residents of the OCDS program area, some of whom were students and street gang members, suggested that fears over suffering victimization were reduced following the installation of traffic barriers

Conclusion and Recommendations:

- Traffic barriers appeared to have strong effect on reducing homicides and drive-by shootings during active OCDS program period
- Traffic barriers appeared to play a key role in reducing some predatory crimes, and in particular aggravated assaults
- Traffic barriers appear to have noticeable positive effects on community factors such as fear of crime, routine activities and student truancy
- Traffic barriers did not appear to cause "displacement" of or "adaptation" of criminal behavior
- A "community approach" rather than "single street approach" should be used to guide the placement of traffic barriers
- Major schools and locations of potential criminal actives should be included in traffic barriers configurations
- Use traffic barriers to change crime causing routine activity patterns
- Allow community members to participate in the planning and design of traffic barrier placement

2. *Promising Strategy – Summary of Operation Ceasefire, Boston, MA*

Braga, A. A., Kennedy, D. M., Waring, E. J., & Piehl, A. M. (2001). Problem-oriented policing, deterrence, and youth violence: An evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 38*(3), 195-225.

Overview:

Operation Ceasefire (1996), an initiative under the Boston Gun Project was a problem oriented policing intervention aimed at reducing youth homicide, and youth firearms violence in Boston. It was based on the "pulling levers" deterrence strategy to mitigate the chronic violence perpetrated by a few gang-involved youth, who were responsible for a major part of Boston's youth homicide epidemic. The operation lead to significant reductions in youth homicide victimizations, and gun assaults in Boston. Also, there was a stark decrease in shots fired calls for service and gun assault incidents.

Key Points:

- Operation was aimed at reducing homicide victimization among young people in Boston. Target age group was defined as 21 years and below, and at later stages of the operation to 24 years and below. Project was designed to proceed by:
  - Assembling an intra-agency working group on largely line-level criminal justice and other practitioners
  - Applying qualitative and quantitative research techniques to create an assessment of the nature, and dynamics of youth violence in Boston

- Developing an intervention designed to have a substantial, near-term impact on youth homicide
- Implementing and adapting the intervention, and
- Evaluating the intervention impact
- The working group had a set of activities intended to systematically address the patterns of firearms trafficking identified by the research
- Pulling levers was the second element of the working group which involved deterring the violent behavior of chronic gang-offenders, saying that violence will no longer be tolerated, and every lever will be pulled legally when violence occurred

Conclusion and Recommendations:

- There were innovative interventions implemented, and there were significant subsequent substantial reductions in youth violence in Boston
- Timing of these reductions was consistent with intervention having impact because Boston saw comparatively higher number of reductions compared to any other American city, in the same time period, and the large and abrupt changes in Boston were also different from the other cities
- The operation gave evidence to problem-oriented policing being able to provide effective strategies in controlling crime, and valuably added to the growing body of research
- With employing the "pulling levers" strategy, the police were able to track down particular groups that were behaving violently, subjecting them to a range of discretionary criminal justice action, while making sure that communication was active between them and a very specific audience
- Unfortunately, there was no pretest and posttest data available with respect to street dynamics, making this study a little weaker, but had meaningful results nevertheless

3. *Promising Strategy 3 – Summary of Group Violence Reduction Strategy, New Orleans,*

Corsaro, N., & Engel, R. S. (2015). Most challenging of contexts: Assessing the impact of focused deterrence on serious violence in New Orleans. *Criminology & Public Policy, 14*(3), 471-505.

Overview:

Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) was introduced in 2004 at New Orleans, Louisiana. Based on the Operation Ceasefire (Boston) model, this intervention aimed to deter crime and reduce lethal violence perpetuated by gangs and groups of chronic offenders.

Key Points:

- During the GVRS problem identification phase, law enforcement officials in New Orleans partnered with researchers to conduct a series of homicide incident reviews
- Gang audits identified groups most prone to violence across the city's police districts
- Interagency cooperation of local and federal agencies included the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) special agents
- Information about violent street gangs was converted into actionable intelligence by organizing it along the following dimensions:
    - (a) Individual gang members
    - (b) Geography
    - (c) Social networks
    - (d) Participation in violence

- Social network analyses of data indicated that a handful of gangs were diverse and at higher risk for violence via their social networks
- NOPD conducted 5 offender notification sessions to deliver antiviolence messages to offenders. Specifically, group and gang members were warned that the next murder or shooting committed by any individual associated with the notified gang would result in immediate and enhanced law enforcement scrutiny of the entire group for any criminal activity

Conclusion and Recommendations:

- Focused deterrence holds promise as a violence prevention approach in urban contexts with persistent histories of lethal violence, heightened disadvantage, and undermined police (and institutional) legitimacy.
- The development of a multiagency task force, combined with unwavering political support from the highest levels of government within the city, were likely linked to high programmatic fidelity.
- The development of a program manager and intelligence analyst within the organization, and use of detailed problem analyses and integration of research, assisted in identifying the highest risk groups of violent offenders to target for the GVRS notification sessions. The impacts on targeted violence were robust and consistent with the timing of the intervention.
- Key outcomes:
  - GVRS team members in the City of New Orleans closely followed model implementation
  - Homicides in New Orleans experienced a statistically significant reduction above and beyond changes observed in comparable lethally violent cities
  - The greatest changes in targeted outcomes were observed in gang homicides, young Black male homicides, and firearms violence
  - The decline in targeted violence corresponded with the implementation of the pulling levers notification meetings. Moreover, the observed reduction in crime outcomes was not empirically associated with a complementary violence-reduction strategy that was simultaneously implemented in a small geographic area within the city

4. *Promising Strategy – Summary of Operation Peacekeeper, Stockton, CA*

Braga, A. A. (2008). Pulling levers focused deterrence strategies and the prevention of gun homicide. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 36*(4), 332-343.

Overview:

A number of jurisdictions have employed the "pulling levers" deterrence strategy for small, but chronically offending gangs responsible committing a majority of urban gun violence. An interagency task force implemented "pulling levers" strategy to respond to gun violence and chronic gang offending. The "Operation Peacekeeper" initiative demonstrated a statistically significant decrease in monthly numbers of gun homicides in Stockton in comparison to other similar programs in California.

Key Points:

- The analysis phase of Operation Peacekeeper consisted of police officers analyzing the causes behind a string of gun violence or substantive community concern
- SPD (Stockton Police Department) used the crime analysis to document basic dimensions of homicide in Stockton.

- A review of data demonstrated a regular cycle of gang violence entwined in retribution, among perpetrators/victims well known to the police
- As the operation unfolded, SPD increasingly engaged in a systematic assessment of their homicide problem and focused on high-risk gangs. The department relied upon their understanding of street dynamics, and devised innovative tactics in response

Conclusion and Recommendations:

- The impact evaluation suggested that the Operation Peacekeeper "pulling levers" strategy was associated with a significant reduction in gun homicides in Stockton
- The results of the impact evaluation supported the growing body of research that asserts problem-oriented policing can be used to good effect in controlling crime and disorder problems
- There were no control areas (or control gangs) set aside within the city because of the following:
    a. the aim was to do something about gun homicide wherever it presented itself in the city,
    b. the target of the intervention was defined as the self-sustaining cycle of violence in which all gangs were caught up and to which all gangs contributed, and
    c. the communications strategy was explicitly intended to affect the behavior of gangs and individuals not directly subjected to enforcement attention
- Since the evaluation was conducted ex post facto (i.e., after the fact), it was not possible to collect the necessary pretest and post-test data to shed light on the specific mechanisms responsible for the observed reduction
- Lastly, the growing body of research evidence on the efficacy of the pulling levers intervention, as opposed to zero tolerance policy, suggests a new approach to controlling violent offenders through a more focused application of deterrence principles

Table 1. A selection of evidence-informed gang and violence intervention strategies.

Program	Key components	Key groups	Outcomes
1. Operation Cul-de-Sac, Los Angeles, CA *(see Lasley 1996)*	• Directed at gang drive-by shootings, assaults, and homicides • 80-90% of drive-by shootings happened on residential streets at the periphery of the community, which were connected to major thoroughfares that provided easy escape routes • Installation of traffic barriers to block access to certain streets by cars • Year 1 more intensive levels of street policing by 15 officers • Removed signs of physical disorder and created block clubs	• LAPD • 15 officers responsible for street policing in the target areas	• No evidence of displacement, but instead a diffusion of benefits • Drive by shootings fell significantly • Predatory crime down 8% in year 1, 37% in year 2 • 31% reduction in property crime, unclear if OCDS was responsible • School attendance increased by about 200 students/day at the local high school • Support for a drop in residents' fear of crime • After 2 years, the barriers were damaged and no longer prevented vehicular access
2. Operation Ceasefire Boston, MA *(see Braga et al. 2001; Braga & Pierce 2005)*	• One element of a more comprehensive strategy to address gang crime • Pulling levers strategy aimed at gang-involved youths and illicit firearms traffickers supplying them with guns • Increase local, state, and federal authorities' attention to intrastate gun trafficking • Focus on the makes and calibers used most often by young gang members, and guns showing a short time to crime (< 18 mo.) • Restoring obliterated serial #s • Analyzing crime gun traces generated by BPD investigations and arrests involved with gangs or violent crimes	• BPD • MA Probation & Parole • Suffolk County DA • US Attorney • ATF • MA Dept. of Youth Services • Boston School Police • Gang outreach and prevention "street workers" • Ten Point Coalition of activist Black clergy • DEA • MA State Police • MA Attorney General	• 63% reduction in average monthly # of youth homicide victims (from 3.5/month to 1.3/month) • 25% decrease in monthly # of citywide gun assaults • 32% reduction in monthly # of shots-fired CFS • 47% reduction in percentage of new traced handguns in Boston • 23% reduction in average monthly percentage of recovered handguns that were new • 30% reduction in average monthly percentage of illegal possession handguns that were new
3. Group Violence Reduction Strategy New Orleans, LA *(see Corsaro & Engel 2015)*	• Homicide incident reviews, gang audits, and social network analysis to identify 59 potential gangs (with ~700 members) in 6 districts • Offender notification sessions with targeted gang members	• NOPD workgroup • ATF agents • UC researchers • Members of Cincinnati PD • Social service and community partners	• Decline in homicides 17% lower than the homicide rate change in 14 comparison cities • Firearm-related homicides down 17% • Firearm assaults down 16% • Gang-involved homicides down 30%

	• Small group receive "custom notification sessions"		
4. Operation Peacekeeper Stockton, CA *(see Braga 2008)*	• Sought to reduce gang involvement and gun-related violence among urban youths (ages 10-18) • Relies on Youth Outreach Workers to communicate to at-risk youths that they have better options and to educate them about the consequences of violence	• Stockton PD • Youth Outreach Workers	• Overall 42% reduction in monthly number of gun homicides • None of the eight comparison cities in CA experienced a statistically significant reduction during this time
Operation LASER Los Angeles, CA *(see Uchida & Swatt 2013)*	• Creation of Crime Intelligence Detail (2 officers + 1 analyst) • Identified five hot spots for gun-related crime in the Newton Division • Disseminated bi-monthly "Chronic Offender Bulletins," rank-ordered based on known risk factors • Remove chronic offenders from the areas in a non-invasive manner • Directed patrols • Bike and foot patrols • CCTV cameras	• LAPD • Crime Intelligence Detail • Research partners	• Monthly homicides down 22% • Gun crimes down 5%
Firearm Suppression Program (aka Consent to Search) St. Louis, MO *(see Rosenfeld & Decker 1996; Decker & Rosenfeld 2004)*	• Phase 1: Problem solving/aggressive order maintenance • Phase 2: Crime control/suppression • Phase 3: Targeted intervention/Attempted community mobilization • Specially trained squad of officers visited homes of juveniles at high risk of being victims or offenders • Asked parents for permission to search juveniles' rooms for guns or contraband • In return, they gave the parents a signed form promising not to prosecute • Not specifically geared toward gang members but could easily be implemented that way	• SLPD's Mobile Reserve Unit • Parents and neighbors • Clergy	• 98% of parents consented to search during Phase 1, with approx. 50% of searches yielding a gun • Over 500 guns seized during Phase 1 (18 months) • 42% of parents consented to search during Phase 3, with less than 25% of searches yielding a gun • 31 guns seized during Phase 2 (9 months) • 29 guns seized during Phase 3 (9 months) • Many implementation obstacles impeded success at Phases 2 and 3

Related Educational Resources

Bevan, N, Kirakowski, J and Maissel, J, 1991, What is Usability?, in H.-J. Bullinger, (Ed.). *Human Aspects in Computing: Design and use of interactive systems and work with terminals*, Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Kirakowski, J and Corbett, M, 1988, Measuring User Satisfaction, in D M Jones and R Winder (Eds.) *People and Computers IV*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patton, D. U., Eschmann, R. D., Caitlin, E., & Bocanegra, E. (2016). Sticks, stones and Facebook accounts: What violence outreach workers know about social media and urban-based gang violence in Chicago? *Computers in Human Behavior, 65*, 591-600.

Patton, D. U., Hong, J. S., Ranney, M., Patel, S., Kelley, C., Eschmann, R. & Washington, T. (2014). Social media as a vector for youth violence: A review of the literature. *Computers in Human Behavior, 35*, 548-553.

Patton, D. U., Lane, J., Leonard, P., Macbeth, J., & Smith Lee, J. R. (2017). Gang violence on the digital street: Case study of a south side Chicago gang member's Twitter communication. *New Media & Society, 19*(7), 1000-1018.

Patton, D. U., Patel, S., Hong, J. S., Ranney, M. L., Crandall, M., & Dungy, L. (2017). Tweets, gangs, and guns: A snapshot of gang communications in Detroit. *Violence and Victims, 32*(5), 919-934.

Pratchett, T., 1990 *Moving Pictures*. London: Gollancz

NORTHSTAR

NorthStar Data Report: 2017-18
Prepared August 2018

Prepared By:

WS

WaltherSeck Associates, LLC
402-613-6404
http://waltherseck.com
waltherseck@gmail.com

Executive Summary

Overall, students, parents, and educators report a high level of satisfaction with NorthStar programming and staff. Surveys were provided for 92 students (18 elementary and 74 middle/high school students), 29 educators, and 56 parents. The 2017-18 data demonstrate that:

1. The average age of student respondents increased this year from previous years.

2. Parents remain satisfied with NorthStar programming. Though ratings decreased slightly for a number of measures, ratings remain high.

3. Educators regularly communicate with NorthStar staff. Educators report that NorthStar programs help meet the needs of students.

4. Students indicate a high level of satisfaction and positive outcomes. There was a significant increase on three items: "I help other solve problems" and "I have an adult that I talk with to solve a problem" and "Do you feel comfortable talking to teachers or adults at school?"

5. Few students indicate participating in risk behaviors. Though the percentage of students reporting risk behaviors increased, it did was not a significant change from the previous two years.

6. NorthStar attendance does not appear to affect academic grades, with the exception of middle school science scores, in which increased NorthStar attendance is correlated with increased letter grades in science. However, students, parents, and educators all report that NorthStar assists with homework and academic performance.

CONTENTS

Table of Tables

EVALUATION APPROACH

This evaluation collects data from multiple sources: a parent survey administered once per year, a student survey administered twice per year, academic data provided by schools quarterly, and program attendance data. This year, the Let's Go Learn (LGL) assessment was *not* included as NorthStar will begin transitioning to a new reading and intervention program. To see the revised evaluation approach, please see Appendix 1.

Figure 1. Evaluation approach and measures.

Demographic
- Age
- Grade
- School
- Characteristics (Developmental Assets)
- Risk Behavior

Academic
- Attendance
- Tardiness
- Grades / Report Card

Programmatic
- Attendance
- Program type
- Engagement
- Satisfaction
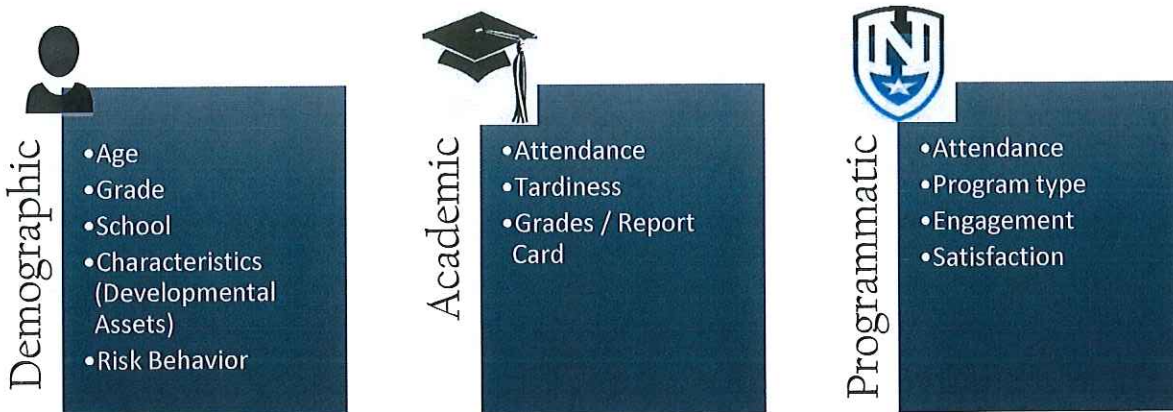
By collecting data from multiple sources, we can better understand the impact of the NorthStar program. Our goal is to build a robust data set by participants to understand change and impact over time.

1

EVALUATION RESULTS: 2017-18

Participants

Our evaluation goal is to measure the impact of NorthStar through feedback from students, parents, and educators (see Table 1. Data by type and time point). A total of 56 parents completed the parent survey and 29 educators (teachers, counselors, or administers) completed the educator survey in 2018.

Table 1. Data by type and time point

Data by Type - Time	Time	Number of participants
Student Survey – May 2016	May 2016	38
Student Survey – December 2016	December 2016	52
Student Survey – Spring 2017	Spring 2017	99 *(111)*
Student Survey – Spring 2018	**Spring 2018**	**92 *(118)***
Parent Survey – November 2016	November 2016	52
Parent Survey – April 2018	**April 2018**	**56**
LGL (DORA) – Spring 2016	Spring 2016	74
LGL (DORA) – Fall 2016	Fall 2016	63
LGL (DORA) – Spring 2017	Spring 2017	68
OPS – Grade cards *(partial data)*	Fall 2016	104
OPS – Grade Cards Spring 2017	Spring 2017	187
CitySpan Fall 2016	Fall 2016	207
CitySpan – Spring 2017	Spring 2017	340
Educator Survey – Spring 2017	May 2017	11
Educator Survey – Spring 2018	**May 2018**	**29**

A total of 118 students started the most recent student survey, and 92 consented and completed the survey. Of the 92 consenting students, 18 completed the elementary survey and 74 completed the middle or high school survey. Of those students, most were in 6th or 9th grades (see Figure 2. Percent of student survey participants by grade).

Figure 2. Percent of student survey participants by grade
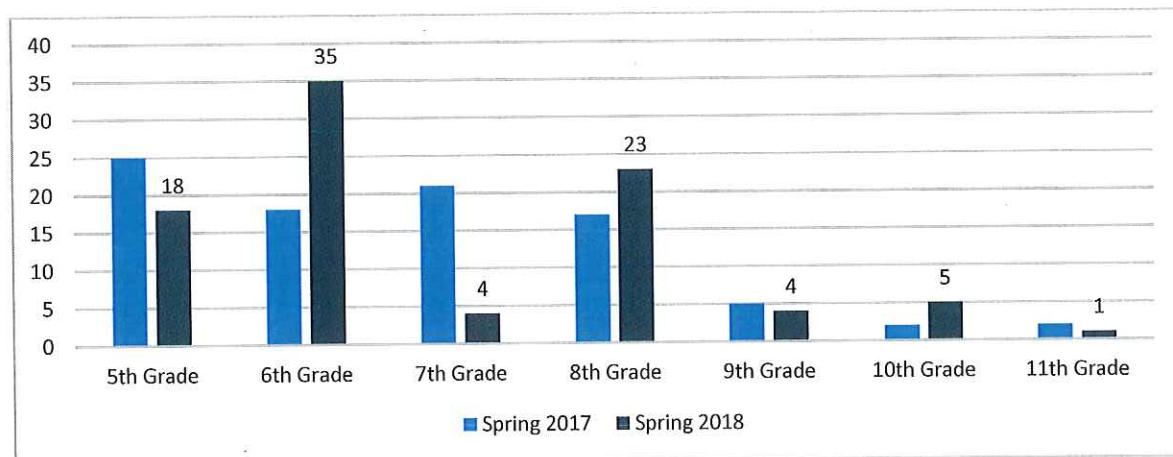
Students at NorthStar reported attending 25 different schools, though a majority of students came from Monroe, Buffett, and McMillan schools (see Table 2).

Table 2. School by survey time point

	Spring 2017	Spring 2018
Missing	10	28
Alpha	0	1
Belvedere	1	1
Benson	3	1
Bryan	1	0
Buffett	13	9
Central Park	3	2
Davis	2	6
Druid Hill	0	1
Fontenelle	5	1
Hale	4	4
Holy Name	6	6
Jesuit	2	8
King Science	7	5
KSTM	1	0
Masters	0	2
McMillan	12	9
Monroe	18	13
Morton	1	3
Mt. View	1	0
North	3	4
Northwest	3	6
Phoenix	6	4
Sacred Heart	6	4
SHS	1	0
SPS1	1	0
St. Pius St. Andrew	1	0

On average, students were 12 years of age (M = 12.49, SD = 1.47); most students were in middle school (52.5%) and elementary school (15.3%). Some students did not report a school or school type (22.9%). The average age for students significantly increased between 2016 (M=10.98, SD = 1.41), 2017 (M=11.85, SD = 1.37), and 2018 (M= 12.49, SD = 1.47) (F= 18.07, p < .01).

For the 2017-2018 school year, NorthStar had 454 total student sign-ups, with at least 401 students attending at least 1 day. Of the 401 students, the average days attendance was 61 days (M=61.18, SD=44.20). Of students who attended at least 30 days per semester (or 60 per year), the average attendance was 103 days (M=103.34, n = 194). This indicates that NorthStar is growing its average attendance, and students are growing in regular attendance.

Parent & Guardian Satisfaction with NorthStar

The parent survey was administered in Fall 2016 and Spring 2018 with student jersey pick-up and drop-off. Fifty-one (51) parents or guardians representing students at 18 schools completed the parent survey in November 2016. **Fifty-six (56) parents or guardians representing students at 22 schools completed the parent survey in April 2018.**

Overall, parents and guardians ranked the NorthStar program positively. In 2018, all of the parent program ratings were rated significant above neutral (2.50) (Table 3). Parent ratings significantly decreased for the ratings of the overall NorthStar program and the transportation; however, ratings significantly increased for the rating of the snacks served.

Table 3. Parent program ratings

Program Rating Item	2016 Mean	2018 Mean	SD	F
The overall NorthStar program	3.84	3.65	.48	4.78*
The transportation provided, if any	3.94	3.80	.41	6.87*
The safety of your child while he/she is at NorthStar	3.82	3.67	.57	.17
The hours of operation	3.78	3.41	.55	.86
The atmosphere and comfort of the of the room(s) in which NorthStar programs operate	3.71	3.81	.44	.86
The snacks that are served to your child on a daily basis	3.71	3.78	.42	4.69*

Rated on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent)
* Indicates significant change between 2016 and 2018 rating (p<.05)

Likewise, parents and guardians found the opportunities and programs at NorthStar ideal for their child. Again, in 2018, all the mean ratings for parent satisfaction were rated significantly above neutral (2.50) (Table 4).

Table 4. Parent satisfaction ratings

Satisfaction Item	2016 Mean	2018 Mean	SD	F
I am satisfied with the kinds of programs and activities offered at NorthStar.	3.86	3.57	.50	8.69*
There is adequate opportunity for physical activity.	3.86	3.56	.59	2.62
NorthStar has helped my child get his/her homework done on time.	3.71	3.36	.79	4.61*
There is adequate quiet time for my child to complete homework.	3.67	3.72	.45	.66
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the after-school staff.	3.86	3.55	.50	5.70*
I am comfortable talking with the staff.	3.84	3.70	.46	.46
The staff welcomes suggestions from parents.	3.80	3.60	.50	.40
The staff encourages positive interactions among the children.	3.79	3.60	.49	.34
I am satisfied with the number of adult staff available to work with the students.	3.79	3.61	.49	2.20

Satisfaction Item	2016 Mean	2018 Mean	SD	F
I am satisfied with the manner adult staff interact with the students.	3.75	3.61	.49	.01
I am comfortable with how the staff handles discipline problems.	3.70	3.47	.51	.71
The staff welcomes parents who wish to observe.	3.67	3.66	.48	.46
The staff has clearly informed me about how to contact them during the after-school program.	3.66	3.48	.75	1.07
The staff keeps me informed about my child's day at the after-school program.	3.50	3.04	.96	.55
I understand the safety and security procedures. [1]	-	3.57	.54	-

Rated on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree)
* Indicates significant change between 2016 and 2018 rating (p<.05)

Additionally, parents rated their perception of their student's experience at NorthStar. Again, in 2018, all the mean ratings for parent satisfaction were rated significantly above neutral (2.50) (Table 5).

Table 5. Parent perceptions of student NorthStar experience.

My student...	2016 Mean	2018 Mean	SD	F
Enjoys attending the NorthStar basketball program.	3.81	3.53	.56	4.15*
Feels comfortable with the NorthStar staff.	3.84	3.69	.47	.63
Seems happier or less stressed since participating in NorthStar programs.	3.76	3.67	.48	.36
Has friends in the NorthStar program.	3.78	3.60	.54	2.11
Completes homework with greater ease.	3.54	3.17	.83	4.87*
Has a better attitude towards school.	3.59	3.35	.57	1.71

Rated on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree)
* Indicates significant change between 2016 and 2018 rating (p<.05)

Parents and guardians most often send their student to NorthStar for the enrichment activities that NorthStar offers (see Table 6). Parents and guardians report that if their student was not at NorthStar, he would likely be under different adult supervision (44.6%), though some parents report that their student may be home alone (25%) (Table 7).

Table 6. Parent/Guardian reason for enrolling in NorthStar (2018)

	Percent
Student needs after-school supervision	60.7
Student is interested because friends are attending	62.5
Student is interested because of the enrichment activities offered	64.3
Student needs homework assistance	57.1

[1] New in 2018

	Percent
Teacher recommended program	37.5
Parent is interested in enrichment programs	66.1
Other:	14.3

Table 7. Where student would be if not at NorthStar

What would your student be doing if not at NorthStar?	Percent
Staying home with adult supervision	44.6
Attending another after-school program	28.6
Staying home alone	25.0
Attending a variety of places during the week	25.0
Be cared for by neighbors or relatives	23.2
Attending a private daycare center	14.3
Other:	3.6

Parents and guardians report choosing NorthStar due in large part to both the programming, homework help, and location. Parents note that NorthStar provides social interaction opportunities and structure; for example, one parent stated, "We don't have a lot of kids in our neighborhood and [student] craves peer interaction." Likewise, another parent stated, "It helps to know that my son is in a secure place, learning and enjoying."

Parents reported additional reasons for attending NorthStar, such as hours, opportunities, transportation, and hearing about the program from others. Parents and guardians note that NorthStar is recommended to them by others. In addition, they appreciate that NorthStar provides transportation and helps their student make friends with others.

Table 8. Why parent/guardian chose NorthStar

Why did you choose NorthStar for your child instead of other programs?	Percent
Quality of Programming	76.8
Quality of Staff	66.1
Learn new skills (leadership, arts, technology)	66.1
Homework Help	64.3
Location	60.7
Basketball Program	46.4
Outward Bound	43.1
Other	21.4

Parents reported liking the staff, programs, educational opportunities, homework assistance, and structure. Guardians and parents reported about the aspects they liked best about NorthStar; many

parents noted that NorthStar was a safe place, and they enjoyed that the program provided both academic help and opportunities for play and activities.

> *A positive place for me to send my boys. I know they will be safe.*

> *Balance of school and activities.*

> *It helps him with his homework.*

> *It's a safe and positive space for him. ...he enjoys the physical activity.*

> *Hands on help with homework and sports activity.*

> *It is a safe and positive place for him.*

Parents were asked for suggestions for the NorthStar program as well. The most common suggestion for improvement was homework assistance. Parents and guardians also noted a need for the program when OPS or private schools were not open.

> *My son needs more help with his homework, like actually being in contact with their teachers.*

> *The homework help.*

> *More time to study.*

> *Open on days OPS is out of school.*

Many guardians and parents completing the survey had toured the NorthStar program (51.8%), though very few volunteered with NorthStar (1.8%). Many guardians and parents noted that they would be happy to volunteer with NorthStar if available.

In sum, programming opportunities play a large part in parent choice of afterschool program and parent satisfaction with programming.

Educator Satisfaction with NorthStar

Eleven educators completed the educator survey in May 2017, and **29 educators completed the survey in May 2018.** Most respondents were elementary school teachers or counselors (see Table 9).

Table 9. Respondent by role and year

Role	Year	
	2017	**2018**
Elementary School Teacher	6	10
Middle School Teacher	0	4
High School Teacher	0	1
Social Worker	0	1
Counselor	4	10
Administrator	1	0
Other	0	3
Total	*11*	*29*

In 2018, most indicated that they have had a conversation with a student who is struggling (86.2%). Further, most respondents (89.3%) indicated that they had a conversation with NorthStar about providing additional support or collaboration.

Educators were asked to rate how often they communicate with NorthStar staff about student education needs; respondents indicated that they spoke to NorthStar at least monthly (M=2.97, SD = 1.02) with most indicating that they speak to NorthStar at least weekly (36.7%, n = 11).

Next, educators were asked to rate how helpful NorthStar is in helping address the needs, improving academic performance, and improving the behavioral engagement of each educator's students. In each area, NorthStar was rated at least "Somewhat helpful" (see Table 10). There was no difference in helpfulness between May 2017 and May 2018.

Table 10. Educator rating of helpfulness of NorthStar

Survey Item	Mean (2018)	SD
Collaborating with NorthStar helps me better **address the needs** of my students.	3.90	1.26
NorthStar participation helps to improve the **academic performance** of my student(s).	3.96	1.01
NorthStar participation helps to improve in the **behavioral engagement** of my student(s).	3.93	1.36

Survey items were ranked on a scale of 1 (Not helpful at all) to 5 (Extremely helpful).

Next respondents were asked to share any recommendations for a program or service they would like to see NorthStar provide. Responses included transportation to home, skills-based learning, and increased academic assistance:

> *Transportation home*

> *I would like to have communication with NorthStar about students attending so all parties can be on the same page about needs of participating students.*

8

Ability for students to start in high school when they are freshmen

Program to support student with reading/math challenges.

I would like to collaborate more with North Star about homework and behavior to create a successful partnership between the school and North Star for the students who attend on a regular basis.

Study skills, budgeting, careers

Leadership and social skills programs.

Finally, participants were asked to share a success story about their work with NorthStar:

I believe that it really helped [student] while he attended. It helped provide structure and supervision especially for a difficult transition for him to Omaha.

I think being able to communicate with the boys that if we don't get something accomplished during the day at school, they can get help at NorthStar too, is very helpful when they are stressed about an assignment.

So many of our students that I have been concerned about have "blossomed" at NorthStar with more positive attitudes. The boys going there love it so much that they "sell" it to the other boys who then want to go. I love the support they give our school. They are always open to a concern or question from any staff member. The most fabulous gift for our young men to be NorthStar's nurturing them as they continue on. Thank YOU!!! :)

I think Mr. Watts does a great job and is great with the kids. My student in particular has continued behavior issues, but i attribute this to the chaos in the home setting.

[Student] was able to turn in his homework on time, whereas before NorthStar he would rarely turn in homework.

So many. Seth. Hanna, Tim come up on days off to build relationships. The kids love them, respect them, and work for them.

Wonderful staff. All of my boys were amazed by the experience (8 boys)

David Whitcomb has become more self-assured and less "poty" with consequences for his actions.

Student Satisfaction with NorthStar

In the 2017-2018 year, separate student surveys were administered to elementary students (5th grade) and middle and high school students (6th – 11th grade).

NorthStar Experience

In the Spring 2018, most students report most often attending basketball programs (51.7%), open gym (51.7%), computer room (48.3%), and homework (33.9%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Number of respondents indicating program(s) attended (Spring Semester)
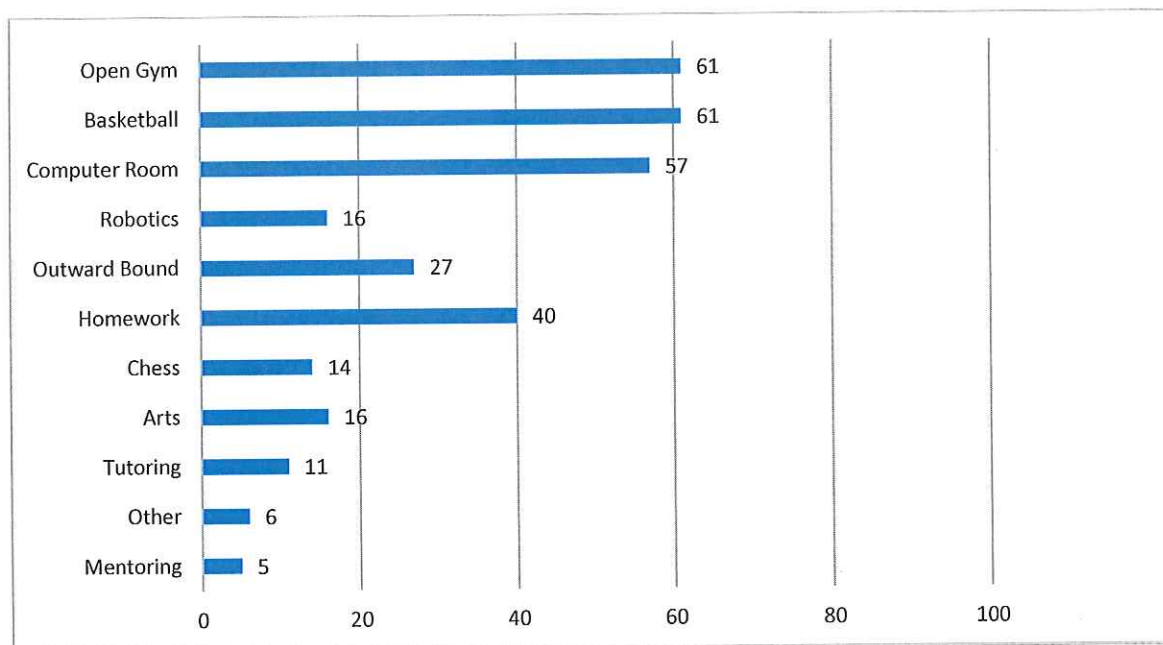
Nearly half of students indicated their intent to attend summer for the summer program (41.5%); 28.8% were unsure.

Students were asked to rate their NorthStar experience on a scale of 1 (No) to 4 (Yes, almost always). This scale is based on an engagement and participation in after school programs as a predictor of social skills (Shernoff, 2010) as well as a scale to measure out-of-school time programs impact (Geiger & Britsch, n.d.). There were no significant differences in the mean ratings of NorthStar experience between 2016, 2017, and 2018 (n=105). There was no significant relationship between attendance and student experience ratings for any item (n=15).

Table 11. Student rating of NorthStar experience Fall 2016 - Spring 2018

Student experience item	Mean Spring 2018 (n=92)	Mean Spring 2017 (n=99)	Mean Fall 2016 (n=50)	F
I get to use my skills at NorthStar.	3.25	3.29	3.27	.05
I feel challenged when I am at NorthStar.	-	2.03	1.83	-
I learn new skills at NorthStar.	2.89	2.86	2.75	.35
I enjoy the after school program.	3.14	3.42	3.50	1.45

Student experience item	Mean Spring 2018 (n=92)	Mean Spring 2017 (n=99)	Mean Fall 2016 (n=50)	F
I feel safe at NorthStar.	3.51	3.45	3.64	.36
I have enough quiet time to complete homework at NorthStar.	2.87	2.98	2.89	.28
I am doing better in school since coming to NorthStar.	2.90	2.89	2.93	.06
I feel happier or less stressed since attending NorthStar/	3.05	2.73	3.07	.41
I would you like more time for activities, other than homework, at NorthStar.	-	3.24	3.33	-
I have friends, or someone you like, at NorthStar.	3.67	3.66	3.79	.57
I feel comfortable talking NorthStar staff.	3.30	3.29	3.19	.69
NorthStar staff take time to help me or talk with me when I need it.	3.11	3.14	3.21	.62
I tell others to participate in NorthStar programs.	3.06	3.09	3.15	.99

When asked what they would be doing after school if they were not coming to NorthStar, student responses varied. Many indicated that they would be at home playing video games (53.4%), watching television (44.9%), playing sports (43.2%), or on the internet (48.3%). Fifteen students (12.7%) indicated that they would be working.

Students were asked about their favorite part of attending NorthStar. Many students indicated specific programs such as basketball, open gym, computers, and robotics. Other students listed other items such as socializing, staff members, making friends, having fun, and eating.

Finally, students were asked for any of their ideas to make NorthStar even better. They indicated a wide variety of ideas ranging from small improvements, more choice to increased programs:

Better meals (more white milk)

Nothing. NorthStar is perfect.

Pool and weight room

Video game room (Fortnight, Certain One)

More tech time

More gym time

School Experience

Students were asked to rate their school experience to compare their school experience to that of NorthStar. Between 2016, 2017, and 2018, there was a significant change in students who reported feeling more comfortable taking to teachers or adults at school and a significant decrease in students who reported finding their classes interesting (see Table 12). No school experience items were related to NorthStar program attendance (n=25).

Table 12. School experience as rated by students by time point

	Mean (Spring 2018)	Mean (Spring 2017)	Mean (Fall 2016)	F
Do your guardians talk to you about school or homework?	3.38	3.29	3.06	1.14
Do you feel comfortable talking to teachers or adults at school?	2.71	3.07	2.56	5.07*
Do you study hard for tests?	2.88	3.02	2.92	1.11
Do you like going to school?	2.64	2.72	2.67	1.12
Are your classes interesting?	2.42	2.60	2.56	3.15*
Do you get in trouble at school?	2.04	1.73	1.96	2.95+

Students rated their school experience on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).
*Indicates a significant difference (p < .05)
+ indicates a small but not significant difference (p<.10)

To understand student engagement broadly, students were asked about programs in which they participated in school. Most students participated in afterschool sports (45.8%), though some participated in band (10.2%) or choir (5.1%).

When asked about their grades (M = 3.17, SD = .77) and self-esteem (M = 3.48, SD = .83), most students felt positively about both items on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). There was a significant decrease in how students felt about their academic grades by year (F = 5.37, p < .01).

Individual Characteristics

In addition to their NorthStar and School experiences, students were asked to provide information about their character and risk behaviors. The character scales are based on the "40 Developmental Assets" scales (e.g., Kahne, 2001; Oman et al, 2002) as rated from a scale of 1 (no) to 4 (yes, almost always). There was a significant increase on two items: "I help other solve problems" and "I have an adult that I talk with to solve a problem" (see Table 13). No character ratings were related to NorthStar program attendance (n=21).

Table 13. Student character as rated by students

Character Items	Mean (Spring 2018)	Mean (Spring 2017)	Mean (Fall 2016)	F
I help others solve problems.[2]	2.81	2.57	2.29	4.62*
I help others solve arguments.	-	2.16	2.04	-
I have done things to help my community or school.	2.77	2.67	2.67	.22
I have an adult that I talk to if I'm mad.	2.88	2.87	2.64	.63
I have an adult that I talk with to solve a problem.	3.08	2.73	2.94	3.06*
I feel safe.	--	3.38	3.42	-
I trust other students.	2.47	2.35	2.69	.99
I feel like I belong.	3.03	3.27	3.06	.59
I make good decisions.	2.97	2.98	2.86	-
I feel confident at school.	3.09	3.15	3.10	.40
I like to be in charge of a group.	2.76	2.80	2.66	.38
I say no to activities I think are wrong.[3]	3.21	2.78	3.07	2.32
I know where to volunteer in my community.	-	2.40	2.28	-
It is important to my future to stay in school.	3.74	3.65	3.55	.69
It is important to my family to continue my education after high school.	3.73	3.77	3.73	.73
I am motivated to become a positive force in my community.	3.32	3.24	3.40	.44

Items rated on a scale of 1 (no) to 4 (yes, almost always).
*Indicates a significant difference (p < .05)

[2] Kahne, 2001.
[3] Oman et al, 2002.

Risk Behavior

Students were asked about risk behaviors engagement including gang membership and activities such as drinking, smoking, and fighting. Nearly every NorthStar student reported not being in a gang, and not wanting to (53.4%), 12 respondents reported a desire to join a gang (10.2%), four belonging to a gang in the past (3.4%), and one student indicated current gang membership. The reported gang membership is similar than the state average (3.3%) of current gang membership for eighth graders (Nebraska Risk and Protective Factors Student Survey, 2014). There was no significant difference in gang membership by year (F= 2.05, p > .05).

In terms of risk behaviors, few students indicated participating in risk behaviors. However, some students indicated negative behaviors such as fighting or threatening harm (see Table 14). There was no significant change in response to these risk items by year. No risk behavior ratings were related to NorthStar program attendance (n=27).

Table 14. Student risk behavior as reported by students

| Risk Behavior	Percent indicating risk Spring 2018 (n = 68/83)	Percent indicating risk Spring 2017 (n = 99)	Percent indicating risk Fall 2016 (n = 50)
I have been caught fighting, hitting, or injuring a person in the last month.	20.5%	14.3%	26.5%
I have threatened physical harm to others in the last month.	23.2	12.4	12.0
I have skipped school more than twice in the last month.	7.4	5.4	4.0
I have carried a weapon in the last month.	1.5	1.9	0.6
I have been drunk more than once in the last two weeks.	0	1.8	0
I have shoplifted in the last month.	2.5	0.9	0.2
I smoked cigarettes or use tobacco products every day in the last two weeks.	0	0	0
I have used illicit drugs in the past month.	0	0	0

Academic Impact

Academic data is tracked via grade cards and attendance data provided by OPS through CitySpan.

NorthStar students enrolled in OPS schools, on average, were absent for 8 days during the 2017-18 school year (M= 8.10, SD = 7.99).

Student Grades

Grades provided by Omaha Public Schools (OPS) for consenting students report grades by class. Of the students who consented, 269 students provided grades (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Number of reported grades by school grade
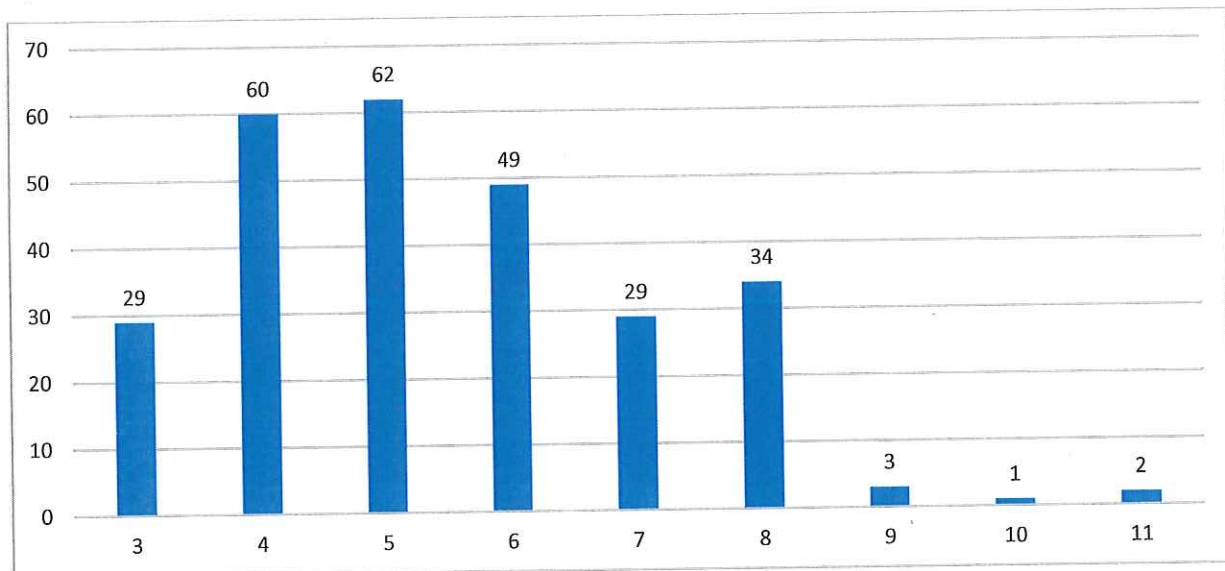
Student grades were grouped by course type (e.g., Reading, Math) by NorthStar.[4] We then differentiated by grade type (elementary, middle, or high school) and scored letter grades on a scale of 0 to 4 (0=F, 1=D, 2 = C, 3= B, 4 = A). The average grade for NorthStar students was about a C in all areas.

There was no difference in average subject grade by grade level for Reading and Writing, but there was a significant difference in average grades by grade level for Math, Social Studies, Science, and Art, where elementary students received the highest grades (Table 15). For example, elementary students have significantly higher grades than middle and high schoolers in Math, Social Studies, *Science*, and Art. Other grades were provided for choir, band, physical education, and miscellaneous classes, but are not included in this analyses.

---

[4] Thanks Jim Stevens and team for grouping and providing grade data.

Table 15. Average score by subject by grade level

Grade Level	Reading	Writing	Math*	Social Studies*	Science*	Art*
Elementary (n=146)	2.26 (C)	2.45	2.22	2.66	2.62	2.59
Middle (n=126)	2.12 (C-)	2.25	1.89	2.25	2.21	2.44
High (n=23)	1.88 (D+)	-	1.30	2.04	1.71	1.73

Scores represent a letter grade from F (0) to A (4).
*Indicates a significant difference in subject grade by grade level.

Finally, average student grades by subject were compared to NorthStar attendance. At this time, there is no significant correlation between scores and NorthStar attendance for overall average, with the exception of middle school science scores, in which NorthStar attendance is positively related to science scores ($r=.49$, $p<.05$) (Table 16).

Table 16. Subject scores by NorthStar attendance

Grade Level	Reading	Writing	Math	Social Studies	Science	Art	Attendance
Average Score	2.17	2.38	2.01	2.44	2.37	2.49	56.46
r	-.06	-.07	-.06	-.07	-.20	-.00	--
High School Score	1.88	-	1.30	2.04	1.71	1.73	67.74
r	.40	-	.39	.17	.49*	.24	-
Middle School Score	2.12	2.25	1.19	2.25	2.21	2.44	60.65
r	-.05	-.05	-.03	-.04	-.01	.15	-
Elementary School Score	2.27	2.45	2.22	2.66	2.62	2.58	51.85
r	-.13	.07	.12	-.11	-.08	-.11	-

Scores represent a letter grade from F (0) to A (4).
*Indicates a significant correlation (p < .05)

Evaluation Recommendations and Future Goals

Based on the available data and future data, in addition to input from the NorthStar program staff, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations:

Evaluation process recommendations

1. Inform students that NorthStar wants to hear their voice as the program grows and evolves.

   a. 194 students attended at least 30 days per semester (or 60 per year); and 118 students provided the survey to staff. Of those that completed the survey, 92(78%) could be used in the analysis due to being incomplete or student did not consent to share the information with the evaluators.

   b. Goal: 100% of students that attend 30 days per semester complete the student survey.

2. Create staff communication solution to better understand student transition from the basketball only program to the full after-school program.

   a. Goal: Set procedure from basketball-only program to full after-school program.

3. Continue to grow teacher and school staff survey response rate at OPS and private schools. Educators provided positive feedback about NorthStar programming and staff and provided valuable insight into possible improvements and refinements for positive student outcomes.

   a. Goal: Set a goal of 20 elementary teachers, 10 middle school teachers, 5 high school teachers, 5 social workers, 20 counselors and 5 administrators for the 2018-2019 school year.

4. Academic data continue to provide an incomplete or inconsistent view of student academic achieve.

   a. Goal: Continue to work towards an academic assessment or intervention tool to measure and assess student progress.
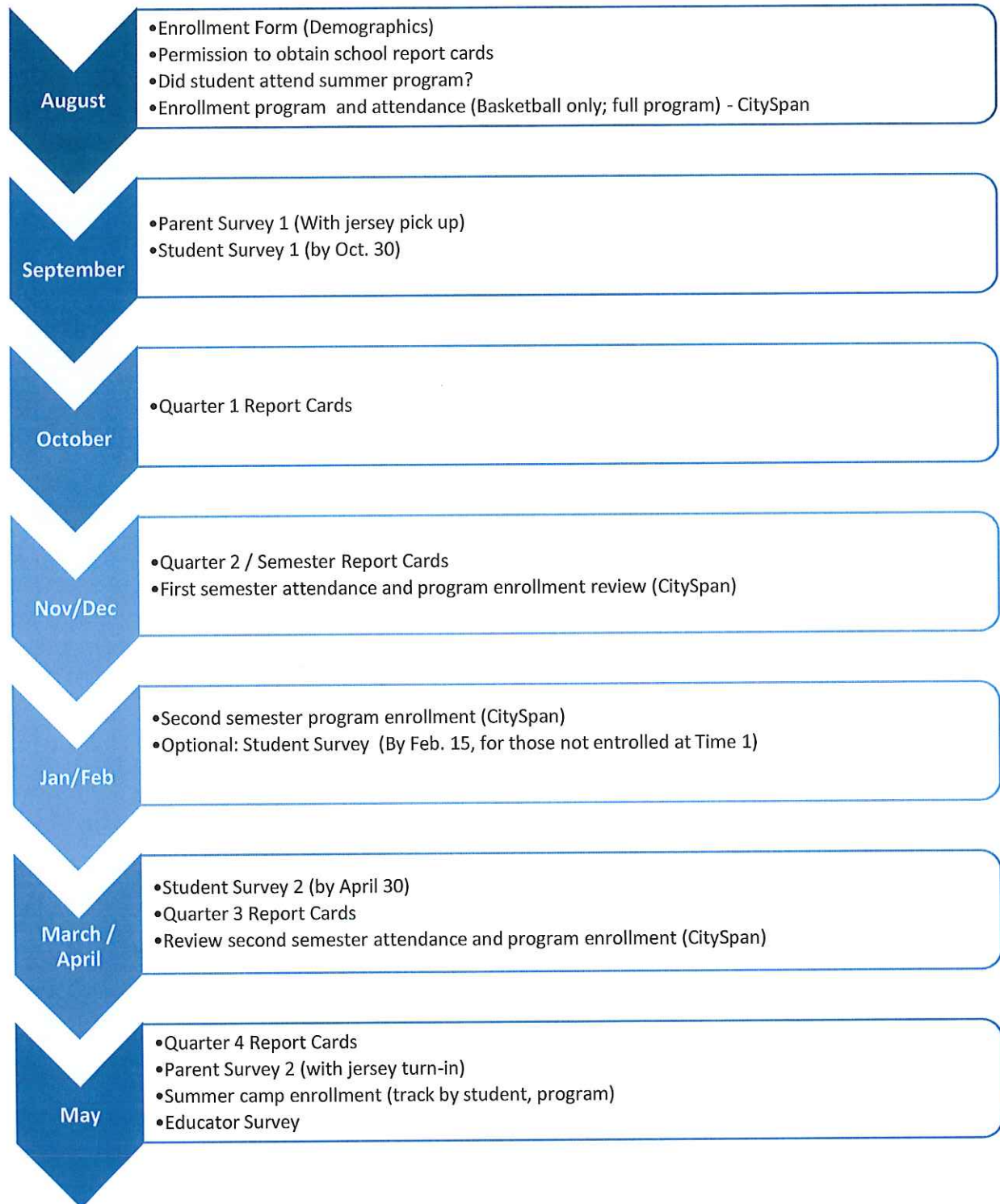
Program recommendations based on evaluation results

1. Increase parent communication during the school year on program activities and transportation. In 2018, parent ratings significantly decreased for the ratings of the overall NorthStar program and the transportation.

   a. Goal: Provide written information and document conversations with parents between surveys to understand feedback, discuss in staff meeting, and communicate any solutions/information to parents.

   b. Goal: Involve parents in NorthStar through volunteering, tours, meetings with staff or other interactions to increase parent understanding of the program and transportation.

2. Students report the highest level of interest in Open Gym, Basketball, Computer Room, Outward Bound, and Homework. Robotics decreased in response from fourth most popular to sixth from 2017 to 2018.

a. Goal: Maintain diverse programming for students to retain students and grow skills.

3. Between 2016, 2017, and 2018, there was a significant change in students who reported feeling more comfortable taking to teachers or adults at school, while at the same time, there was a significant decrease in students who reported finding their classes interesting and how students felt about their grades by year.

   a. Goal: Continue staff focus on building student-teacher conversation skills, growing intersections between class coursework and NorthStar programming and discussing grades with students to increase grades and confidence in school.

4. Student risk behaviors remain low with the exception of threatening hard and fights. Some students indicated negative behaviors such as fighting or threatening harm. There was no significant change in response to these risk items by year. On the student assessment, There was a significant increase on two items: "I help others solve problems" and "I have an adult that I talk with to solve a problem." These are indicators that students trust staff and are learning problem solving behaviors at NorthStar.

   a. Goal: Continue to assess students for risk behaviors to ensure levels remain low.

APPENDIX 1. EVALUATION APPROACH 2018-19 YEAR

NorthStar Program Evaluation Timeline

August
- Enrollment Form (Demographics)
- Permission to obtain school report cards
- Did student attend summer program?
- Enrollment program and attendance (Basketball only; full program) - CitySpan

September
- Parent Survey 1 (With jersey pick up)
- Student Survey 1 (by Oct. 30)

October
- Quarter 1 Report Cards

Nov/Dec
- Quarter 2 / Semester Report Cards
- First semester attendance and program enrollment review (CitySpan)

Jan/Feb
- Second semester program enrollment (CitySpan)
- Optional: Student Survey (By Feb. 15, for those not enrolled at Time 1)

March / April
- Student Survey 2 (by April 30)
- Quarter 3 Report Cards
- Review second semester attendance and program enrollment (CitySpan)

May
- Quarter 4 Report Cards
- Parent Survey 2 (with jersey turn-in)
- Summer camp enrollment (track by student, program)
- Educator Survey

Checklist: Annual NorthStar Evaluation by Student

Enrollment Information (Date / Term)

- [ ] Name
- [ ] Student ID Number
- [ ] School
- [ ] Grade
- [ ] Age
- [ ] Programs Enrolled:
    - o Basketball   (Yes / No, Date Started_____)
    - o Outward Bound   (Yes / No, Date Started_____)
    - o Full   (Yes / No, Date Started_____)
    - o Homework   (Yes / No, Date Started_____)
- [ ] Permission for grade cards
- [ ] Summer enrollment: Yes / No

Assessment Information

Academic:

- [ ] Grade Card
    - o Quarter 1
    - o Quarter 2
    - o Quarter 3
    - o Quarter 4

Student Satisfaction & Character & Behavior:

- [ ] Student Survey 1: Date completed
- [ ] Student Survey 2: Date completed

Parent Satisfaction:

- [ ] Parent Survey 1: Date Completed
- [ ] Parent Survey 2: Date Completed

Urban Youth B.O.L.T. (Building Our Leaders Today)

Program Evaluation

Program Description

The Urban Youth BOLT program is a culturally specific, developmentally appropriate, 10-week program designed to increase the positive attitudes of African Americans via an affirmative reinforcement of the identity of the participants. The program works to address the unique needs of African American youth and to combat negative statistics surrounding social development and academic achievement. The program draws upon the eight Kwanzaa principles to improve cultural identity, enhance social development, and academic achievement. The youth who participate in the program receive the necessary tools for building internal assets that promote social and emotional competence.

The average age of program participants was 14.5 years old. All program participants were African American and most were referred to the program due to a shoplifting criminal charge (15%). It should be noted almost half (43%) of participants' criminal charges were missing.

Top Five Criminal Charges
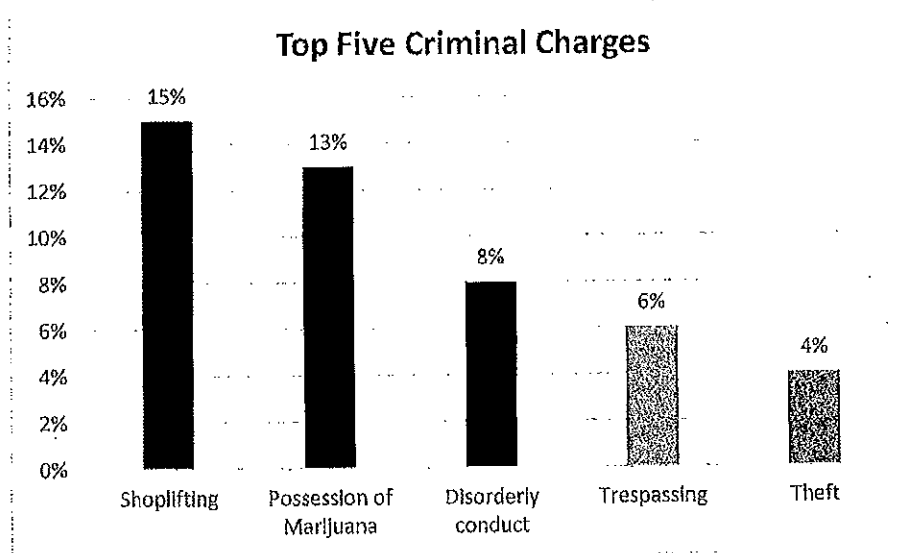
Evaluation Findings

The evaluation findings presented in this report are the outcome results from the African American Adolescent Respect Scale (AAARS), the evaluation tool used to measure respect in the youth who participated in the program. The principle of 'respect' was selected as a measure of program success because it was deemed a principle that was inherently evident in the eight Kwanzaa principles. In addition, results from previous implementations of the program that youth mostly struggled with this concept when interacting with their peers, parents, and other authoritative figures.

The AAARS is a 20-item scale that measures four domains: 1) family, 2) peer group, 3) society – institutions, and 4) society – culture (Leary, 2001). The four domains are defined as:

Family: to address the family sphere of influence in terms of esteem as it relates to membership within the family.

Peer group: the lack of perceived respect resulting in readiness to act aggressively towards peers in an effort to control their potential disrespectful behavior.

Institution: the degree to which the adolescent felt respected when integrating with institutions such as businesses and public and private agencies or organizations.

Culture: the degree to which the adolescent felt respected as an African American within the general culture.

The AAARS was administered at the beginning and end of the 10-week Urban Youth B.O.L.T. program. Below are the participant demographics and results from the AAARS. It should be noted the results in this report only reflect the males who participated in the Urban Youth B.O.L.T. program.

The four domains were evaluated at pre- and post-program. The AAARS is scored from zero to 60 with higher scores indicating more prosocial attitudes toward respect and less use of violence. The overall AAARS score slightly decreased from pre-survey (28.83) to post-survey (28.60). Essentially, the overall respect of African American youth in the program did not significantly change from beginning to the end of the program. In fact, their attitudes about respect slightly decreased.

AAARS Total Scale Score
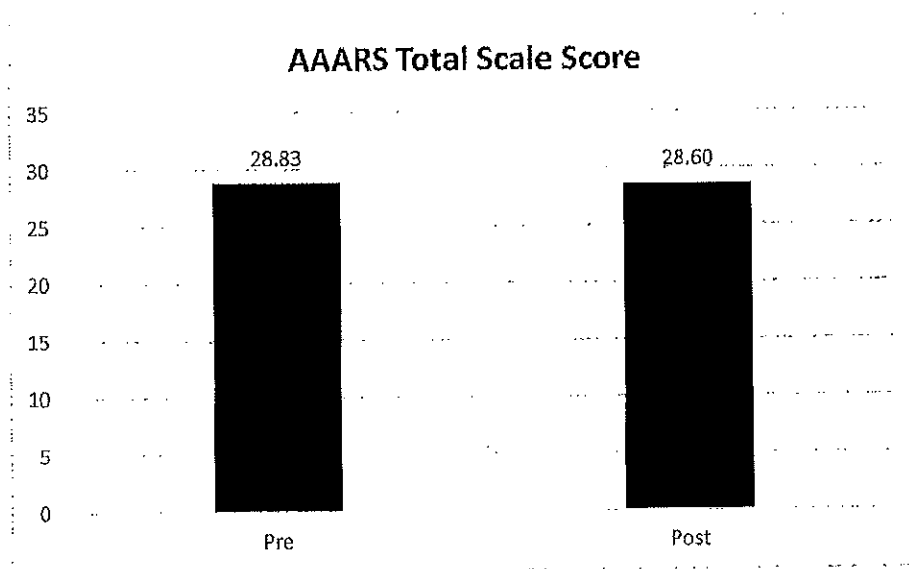
For the family subscale, respect for the family increased from pre-survey (9.26) to post-survey (9.51). This implies that program participants had a more positive attitude about esteem regarding their family roles, which ultimately improved their respect for their family.

AAARS Family Subscale Score

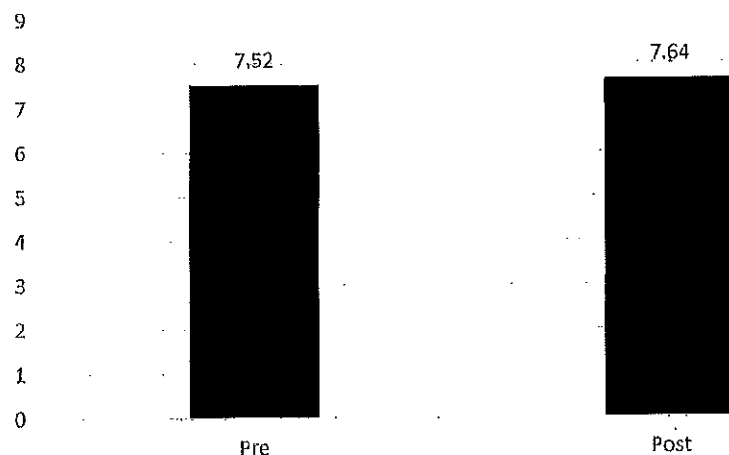|	Pre	Post
Score	9.26	9.51

(Scale 0–10)
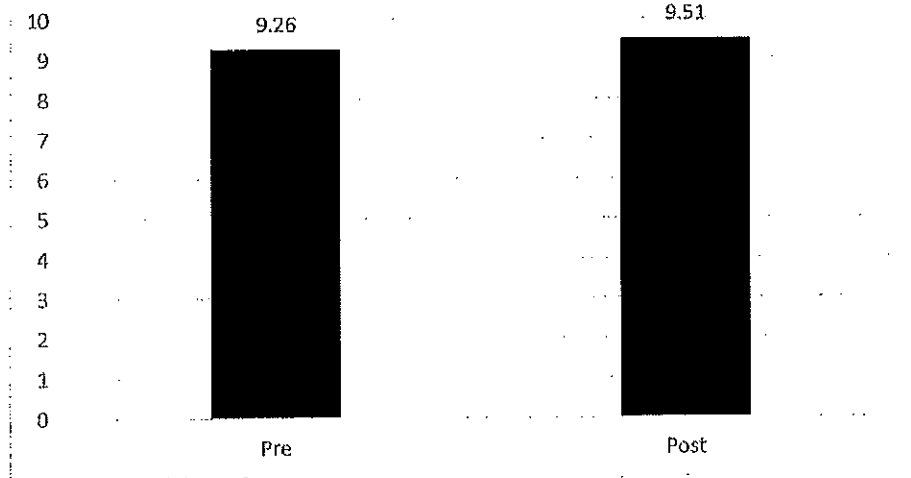
The peer subscale slightly decreased from pre-survey (7.67) to post-survey (7.53). These results indicate that, by the end of the program, participants increasingly believed they needed to act aggressively towards peers in an effort to control their potential disrespectful behavior. Ultimately, program participants continued using aggressive behaviors towards their peers to receive respect.

AAARS Peer Subscale Score

|	Pre	Post
Score	7.67	7.53

(Scale 0–9)
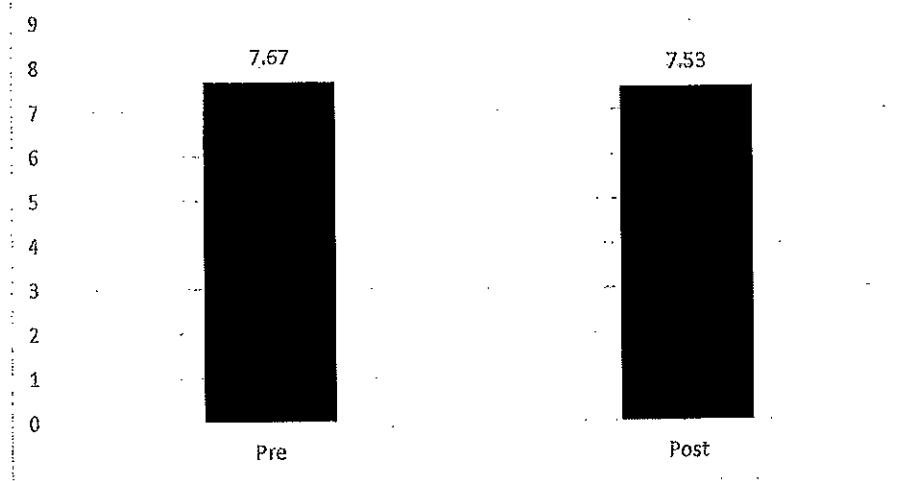
The institution subscale slightly increased from pre-survey (7.52) to post-survey (7.64). These results indicate that, by the end of the program, participants had an increase in positive attitude regarding respect when integrating with institutions (e.g., businesses, public and private agencies).

AAARS Institution Subscale Score

The culture subscale slightly increased from pre-survey (4.29) to post-survey (4.44). This indicates that program participants has a more positive attitude regarding the respect they receive as an African American.

AAARS Culture Subscale Score
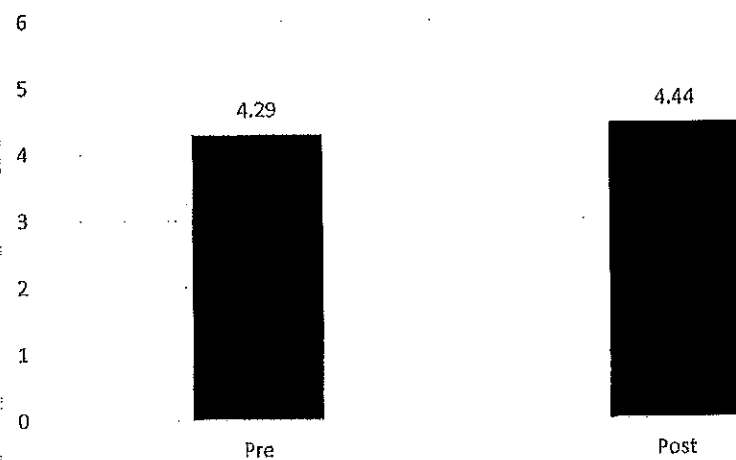
Conclusions

Overall, the AAARS showed program participants had a more positive attitude about receiving (and giving) respect to family, from institutions, and as an African American. Program participants did not have a more positive attitude about receiving respect from their peers and believed they needed to exert aggressive behavior to gain respect from their peers.

The program staff were very passionate about delivering the program and helping the program participants improve in behavior and thought processes. The program facilitators were organized and used positive talk to communicate with the participants. They also showed understanding, compassion,

4

and respect for the participants. The participants were equally receptive to the program facilitators and engaged in the program from week to week.

Recommendations

The recommendations below are based upon the evaluation findings and a limited consultation with an independent evaluator:

1. Develop a logic model to help track the programmatic changes. A logic model is a living document that helps funders and community members unfamiliar with the program understand the purpose, implementation, and outcomes of the program. The program has gained interest and need in the community leading to program growth. This growth will be documented over time with the development of the logic model. In addition, it will provide high fidelity to program implementation.
2. Complete a process evaluation to validate the fidelity of program implementation and program participants' satisfaction with the program. This program evaluation focused on the outcome evaluation.
3. Select a different outcome measurement tool(s) that measure the goals and objectives of the program and is inclusive of all program participants. The AAARS was useful in the initial implementations of the program. The program has expanded its target population to include young girls and the AAARS was not validated to be administered with females.
4. Match the pre- and post-surveys to determine individual and group differences in program participants. The surveys that were administered were missing data, or participants completed the pre-survey but did not complete the post-survey and vice versa.
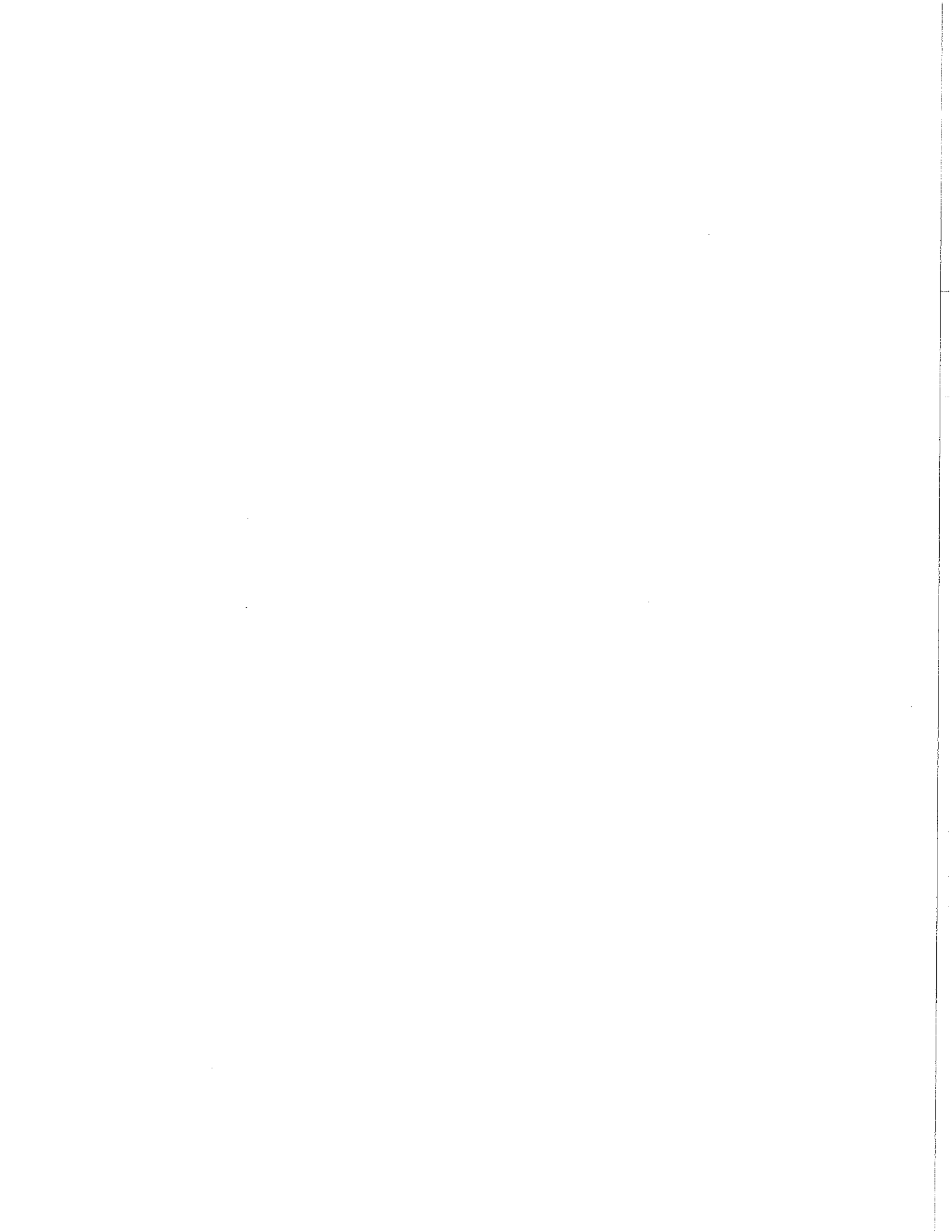
Final Evaluation of the YouthBuild Program

June 2015

Evaluation Team

Lisa L. Sample, Ph.D.

Carin G. Hyter, M.S.

University of Nebraska at Omaha
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Executive Summary

Researchers at the University of Nebraska at Omaha have been asked to conduct a program monitoring an individual outcome evaluation for the YouthBuild program run by Goodwill Industries. YouthBuild Omaha is a targeted intervention program focusing on employment and educational training for 16 to 24 year-old high school dropouts who are at risk for deviant behavior. The following highlights the results of the evaluations:

- We find both fidelity and reliability of service delivery for Goodwill's YouthBuild program.

- Two dominant themes emerged across stakeholders' responses to program monitoring and questions concerning the effects of the YouthBuild program: 1) most believed there would be less violence or criminal activity in the community as a result of YouthBuild and 2) an increase in financial support would lead to further community involvement.

- Most past and current students in the YouthBuild program were satisfied with the services they received, regardless of graduating the program or not.

- A higher proportion of those who completed the YouthBuild program were employed at the time of the interview and more expressed being very satisfied with their jobs than those in the control group.

- More subjects in the control group, or those not graduating the program, reported more criminal arrests than those who graduated from the YouthBuild program.

- Fourteen percent of those in the treatment group as opposed to 20% of those in the control group had been on public aid since leaving the YouthBuild program.

- A greater percentage of students are served and are academically successful when AmeriCorps funding is available to the YouthBuild program.

- While student stipends do not necessarily guarantee academic success in the program, generally more students were academically successful with stipends than without them.

Introduction

The YouthBuild program is intended to help change the lives of young adults who have dropped out of high school by providing career planning, construction training, GED classes, leadership, and life skills training. The YouthBuild USA Offender Project is a targeted intervention focusing on 16 to 24 year-old offenders that is organized around employment (within the context of building/rehabilitating housing) and educational training; two programmatic efforts that have generally shown to have some—albeit modest—success at preventing crime (Sherman, Farrington, Welsh, & MacKenzie, 2002). In broader terms, YouthBuild programs' goals are to help improve individual and community outcomes. Through education, young people learn why and how they can be productive citizens. The outcomes of YouthBuild students help change communities by providing skilled laborers, new homes, housing stability, and potential reductions in crime.

Literature Review/Analytic Framework

To begin the literature review on YouthBuild Omaha, one must first look to a larger scale of YouthBuild USA and its establishment nationwide. A historical glimpse into the YouthBuild program begins in 1978 when a group of teenagers confronted Dorothy Stoneman, then director of the Youth Action Program in East Harlem schools. They expressed their desire to renovate buildings, which would in turn revitalize their community. Stoneman assisted these teenagers and eventually was able to form a coalition of non-profit organizations to replicate the program (Stoneman, 1993). In 1988 when the coalition was expanded nationwide, it was then called the YouthBuild Coalition. In 1990 the non-profit YouthBuild USA was officially founded and by the early 1990s the program had been replicated in 11 cities across the country (Hernandez, 2001; Hahn et. al., 2004).

4

Since 1994, over 40,000 YouthBuild students have "helped rebuild their communities, creating more than 12,000 units of affordable housing" while simultaneously transforming their own lives (Hahn et. al., 2004, p. 2). Primary funding for this program comes from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which began its partnership with YouthBuild in 1994 (Hahn, 2004). Since its development, YouthBuild has been known for its ability to create a "sense of community and belonging" for participants, which in turn has reinforced other program strategies such as leadership and career development (Travis & Leech, 2014, p 18). In addition, after participating in this program, youth show positive results including "predicting a longer life, earning a high-school diploma, and less drug use and criminal behavior" (Acosta & Chavis, Hahn et. al., 2004). The YouthBuild program has shown success nationwide not only for communities, but for the young people that the program intends to serve.

A few research studies have been done thus far regarding different measurements and outcomes within YouthBuild. For example, in 2003 a team of researchers conducted a survey of 17 YouthBuild programs to pinpoint the program conditions that promote consistent high levels of training and retention (Wright, 2003). It was found that attendance and retention will increase and remain high when there is "a strong culture coupled with deliberate implementation of concrete services, good relationships, service and leadership opportunities, and a consistent connection to the future" (Wright, 2003, p. 3). In addition to attendance and retention, there was one outcome evaluation piece available that was published in 2010, which used data from 388 individuals participating in the larger YouthBuild Offender Project from 2004-2007. Results indicated a reduced level of delinquent and criminal recidivism and improved educational outcomes for the

5

YouthBuild participants (Cohen & Piquero, 2010). Despite this information, however, minimal literature exists on evaluations of YouthBuild USA programs. Research has found that all programs across states are fairly similar in composition, but are funded very differently in each city. For example, all programs have their participants work full time for 6-24 months toward earning their high-school diplomas while learning valuable construction skills in building affordable housing in their communities (Pace, 2013). For Nebraska in particular, HUD as well as Goodwill Industries, Inc. and private donors throughout the community fund YouthBuild Omaha. As the following program evaluation proves itself to be innovative and unique in its own right, the current literature in the field (although minimal) has been helpful and important in the creation of this evaluation.

Methodology

The evaluation team presented a work plan outlining how the impact of the Goodwill Industries, Inc. YouthBuild program will be assessed. An implementation evaluation and an outcome evaluation were suggested as the best ways to accurately assess the YouthBuild program's impact on individuals and communities.

Implementation Evaluation

The implementation evaluation process included two components consisting of in person interviews with stakeholders and interviews with those currently participating in the YouthBuild program.

- Stakeholders were asked a series of questions regarding the YouthBuild program, such as the program's intended mission, purpose, and components, as well as suggestions on how to better deliver the program to the target population (for a more detailed description of questions asked, see Appendix 1).

6

- These interviews were performed with past and present stakeholders of the YouthBuild program. For example, the first administrator of the program in 2005 was contacted and interviewed, as well as the current administrator in 2015. Also, other stakeholders included those that focused on program funding and recruitment of students.

- In this process, all interviews were recorded and kept anonymous so stakeholders were free to discuss anything they wanted about the program without their answers being attached to their names.

- Current students (those beginning in January 2015) were asked about their employment status, living arrangements, relationship status, if arrested for a crime since participating in YouthBuild, and if they were on any form of public assistance in January 2015 in order to establish baseline data for this group to be compared to data collected one year after they complete the program.

- Current students were re-interviewed in May 2015 to determine if any had a change in status or opinion.

Outcome Evaluation

The outcome evaluation process has one component of telephone interviews with two past cohorts of students:

- The treatment group consisted of students who successfully completed the YouthBuild program from 2005 - 2015

- In contrast, the control group members were those students who left the YouthBuild program for a number of reasons including incarceration or the YouthBuild administrator found the student was not fully participating in the program.

The total amount of students in the YouthBuild program from 2005 to 2015 is 209 with 130 students being in the treatment group and 61 in the control group, thus suggesting a 62% retention rate for the program, which is notable given the targeted population of high school drop outs. Unremarkably, however, it was difficult to locate young adults to participate in the outcome evaluation for a few reasons:

- A large percentage of phone numbers kept on file at Goodwill Industries, Inc. for these young adults were no longer in service.

- The young adults have proven to be very mobile, moving from one home to the next on a frequent basis without mobile phones.

- Some of the young adults are serving prison terms. Attempts were made to obtain information from these people through a mailed survey the research team sent to their respective prison locations.

The online people tracker program Intelius Premier has proven to be most helpful in reaching the young adults:

- On average, there was anywhere between 10-15 phone numbers per person kept on file through Intelius Premier or other outlets.

- Unfortunately, a great majority of these numbers tended to be out of service or no longer connected to the young person.

The search for the students was an ongoing process, but several students still could be reached over time through this tracker program. The evaluation team first began phone interviews in November of 2014 with the young adults who have been involved with the YouthBuild program. Data collection lasted until April 2015. The samples can be seen in Table 1.

8

Table 1.

	Total Number of Group Members 2005-Present	Number of Interviews Completed	Percent of Group Population
Treatment Group	130	14	10.8%
Control Group	61	5	8.2%
Active Group	18[1]	18	100%

This sample size is smaller than desired, but respondents' answers to interview questions rapidly became similar, suggesting we had achieved a saturation of information within this sample (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). In fact, in qualitative research most scholars suggest a saturation of information among participants is often achieved within five to ten interviews (Ross and Freeman, 1993), meaning knowledge or opinions on a topic will likely be gained rather quickly in the interview process and subsequent interviews often serve to reaffirm the early analysis of information. Nevertheless, the small sample size for this program evaluation prohibits statistical analysis for external validity, or the generalization of information to all 209 students associated with the program.

External validity is a limitation of this outcome evaluation, but internal validity of the findings have been assured by the open-ended nature of questions. By allowing responses to vary across subjects and avoiding "canned" responses, we are actually measuring people's satisfaction with the program, and their employment, housing, and relationship status, which serve as proxy measures for individual stability. It is individual stability that contributes to community organization and wellbeing (Wilson, 1987).

---

[1] Although there are more than 18 active students in YouthBuild at this time, there were only 18 students currently in the program in January 2015, therefore reflecting 100% of the population.

In sum, we used a 10% non-random sample of past YouthBuild participants to assess individual outcomes. Given subjects' ability to refuse to interview for this evaluation, a quasi-experimental research design had to be used, and the lack of random assignment to treatment and control groups suggests an inherent selection bias that limits our ability to generalize the information we received in this study to all 209 past participants (Patton, 2008). The internal validity of this study, however, far exceeds that of most by using qualitative data collection techniques and ensures that the data we collected reflects what Goodwill Industries hoped to gain by this evaluation.

Findings

The findings of this program evaluation are again best observed when split into two categories: implementation and outcome evaluation. When looked at together, both evaluations collectively are able to show that the YouthBuild program is assisting both individual students and the community at large in a way that benefits all involved.

Implementation Evaluation

A total of ten interviews were conducted starting on September 16, 2014 and ending on October 15, 2014. Responses suggest the following:

- Almost all stakeholders stated that the mission or purpose of the YouthBuild program was to educate young people while putting them "on the right track" and transforming their lives.
- One stakeholder summed this question up best by stating that "YouthBuild is helping equip young people with life skills and what it takes to be more successful in life than what they have been. It's more of a life changing focus" (Stakeholder 1).

10

This helps answer part of the first question about the impact that YouthBuild has on individuals.

- Regarding program delivery, students once had to put in an application to be in YouthBuild, but currently there are no applications available to the public. Rather, students come to YouthBuild just by word of mouth, which has resulted in more students who are eligible for the program than its capacity will allow.

- Several stakeholders added that a second cohort or another class in YouthBuild would be ideal since so many are interested in the program.

- Two dominant themes emerged across stakeholders' responses concerning the effects of the YouthBuild program: 1) most believed there would be less violence or criminal activity in the community as a result of YouthBuild, and 2) an increase in financial support would lead to further community involvement.

- Since students would be involved in the YouthBuild program, they would be less likely to be engaging in deviant behavior in communities or indulging in gang activity.

- If students "are earning an honest paycheck, they are not relying on tax dollars and public assistance, which could also help the community" (Stakeholder 3).

- Last, some stakeholders alluded to the idea that further funding for the program would allow more service delivery. Some speculated that community members generally seem pleased when the youth of communities are involved in good programs and avoiding crime, thus improving neighborhood maladies.

Additionally, active program participants were interviewed to determine their satisfaction with the program and to gain baseline data for this group that can be compared to their outcomes at a later date. Their responses suggested:

- Thus far they are satisfied with the program and the services being delivered.

- A majority of students that are currently active are male and almost none of them are currently working.

- Since YouthBuild is an all day program five times per week, it is difficult for students to hold a job. However, half of the students have had jobs before their time in YouthBuild.

- Most currently active students are single with only one student being married before participating YouthBuild, but nine of the 18 already had children before joining the program.

- Three students use public assistance and six students have had criminal arrests before their time in the program.

The implementation evaluation helped to establish that stakeholders shared the same goals and desired outcomes for YouthBuild program participants and were in general agreement on how to deliver program components to achieve these goals. This type of periodic program monitoring ensures program fidelity to its intended design and reliability in service delivery over time. We find both fidelity and reliability of service delivery for Goodwill's YouthBuild program.

Outcome Evaluation

Beginning with the treatment group, or those students who had academic success in the program, several notable conclusions can be drawn:

- All expressed general satisfaction with the YouthBuild program.

- Most of the interviews were with male students and a majority of them have a job that they have held for an average of 6 months to one year.

- Almost all students interviewed had at least one job since their time in YouthBuild, and half of those answering the job satisfaction question are satisfied or very satisfied with the job they currently hold. Only one was not satisfied with his/her job.

- None of the students interviewed are homeless and a majority of them live in homes rather than apartments, thus indicating more stability in living arrangements than the mobility inherent in apartment living.

- Of those not living at home with a parent, the average time at their current residence was 20 months.

- One student has been married since YouthBuild while five students have had children since their participation. Marriage and child rearing are both correlated to lower levels of deviant behavior (drug use, gang activity, etc.).

- Two students out of the 14 interviewed (14%) have had a criminal arrest since YouthBuild and only two students are on public assistance.

These data suggest that those students who have successfully completed the YouthBuild program in the past are exhibiting behaviors that are consistent with conventional lifestyles. These now educated and trained former high school dropouts have developed skills that engender some employment, housing, and relationship stability—all qualities that promote stable and crime-free communities.

The control group, or those students who were separated from the program, had fewer interviews performed than the treatment group, but conclusions and comparisons can still be drawn from these data:

- As found in the treatment group, the majority of those interviewed were male and most expressed satisfaction in YouthBuild's program delivery.

- Unlike the treatment group, however, over half of those interviewed in the control group were not working at the time of the interview, but all five of the students interviewed had at least one job since their time in YouthBuild.

- Of those who were working when interviewed, they had held their jobs for an average of 23 months and were satisfied with the job they had.

- All of the control group students live in houses, those not living with a parent lived in their residence an average of 23 months, and none had changed their marital status since YouthBuild.

- Three of the five students interviewed have children, but unlike the treatment group, one uses public assistance.

- In contrast to the treatment group, 60 percent (3) of the five students have had criminal arrests since leaving YouthBuild, with one student even saying he had at least three arrests.

- Criminal events for this group ranged from robbery, burglary, drug offenses, and domestic assault.

- The reasons given for leaving the program among those in the control group are many, but two of the students claim they left because they were incarcerated and another two said they had personal issues, including a death in the family.

- No student indicated they had left the program due to a failure of service delivery or that services did not meet their needs.
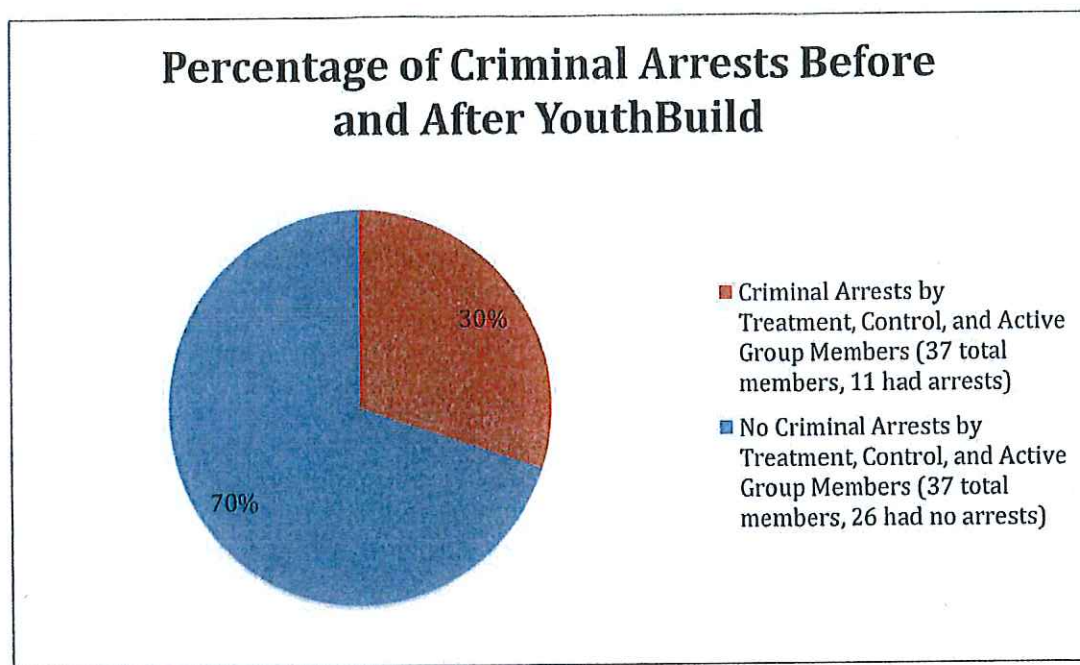
The similarities between treatment and control groups include the gender of the majority of subjects being male and a general satisfaction with the YouthBuild program's components and service delivery. Also, members of both groups have had children out of wedlock.

The differences between the two groups include:

- A higher proportion of those who completed the YouthBuild program were employed at the time of the interview and more expressed being very satisfied with their jobs than those in the control group.

- More subjects in the control group reported criminal arrests than those in the treatment group.

- The average time at current residence was 20 months for treatment group participants and 23 months for control group participants not currently living with a parent, but this difference could reflect the upward housing mobility facilitated by employment. Our data did not explore this possibility.

- Fourteen percent of those in the treatment group as opposed to 20% of those in the control group had been on public aid since leaving the YouthBuild program.

Despite these differences between groups, approximately 70% of all YouthBuild participants interviewed within the treatment, control, and active groups did not have criminal arrests before or after YouthBuild. This is best illustrated in the following pie chart:

Figure 1.

Percentage of Criminal Arrests Before and After YouthBuild

- Criminal Arrests by Treatment, Control, and Active Group Members (37 total members, 11 had arrests)
- No Criminal Arrests by Treatment, Control, and Active Group Members (37 total members, 26 had no arrests)

30%

70%

Individual Outcomes in Context

There are likely several factors in individuals that influenced their abilities to secure and maintain stable employment beyond participation in the YouthBuild program. Family background, social support networks, and biological or psychological maladies are all factors that could influence students' abilities to interview and successfully gain employment, but collection of these data were beyond the scope of this project. There is one factor, however, about the program itself that may impact students abilities to participate and successfully complete in the YouthBuild program—that being the financial support students receive while participating in the program.

From 2005 to 2015, the ability for YouthBuild to provide students with stipends for living expenses has varied. Given the intensity and rigor of the program, students cannot work full time, or perhaps even part time, and still fully participate in the program. With this in mind, we obtained data from Goodwill Industries to cross-tabulate the percent of

students who receive stipends with the percentage of students successfully gaining their GED. Table 2 below suggests mixed results concerning academic success and the use of living stipends in the program. Although stipends were not a necessary cause for obtaining a GED, they clearly do not harm students' ability to learn. Put more simply, there was a higher proportion of students academically successful in YouthBuild who received stipends than those who did not receive stipends.

Another facet of the program that may affect individual outcomes is the funding the YouthBuild program receives for service delivery. Funding obviously affects program capacity or the number of students admitted to the program. This can be seen in Table 2 below in that cohort size appears smaller in years when no AmeriCorps funding is available. More importantly, fewer students are academically successful in years lacking AmeriCorps funding than in years with AmeriCorps funding.

Table 2.

YEAR	FUNDING SOURCE	STIPENDS?	AMERICORPS?	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC SUCCESS
2005	HUD	YES	NO	9/21 = 43%
2006	HUD	YES	NO	10/25 = 40%
2007	GW	NO	NO	3/13 = 23%
2008	GW	NO	NO	6/20 = 30%
2009	ARRA/DOL	YES	YES	10/10 = 100%
2010	ARRA/DOL	YES	YES	27/32 = 84%
2011	GW/ARRA/DOL	NO	YES	13/20 = 65%
2012	GW	NO	YES	30/31 = 97%

| 2013 | DOL | YES | YES | 18/20 = 90% |
| 2014 | DOL | YES | YES | 3/3 = 100% |

An important contribution to individual outcomes for students in the YouthBuild program is the funding the program secures to deliver services and the funding students receive while learning a trade and completing a GED.

- A greater percentage of students are served and are academically successful when AmeriCorps funding is available to YouthBuild.

- While student stipends do not necessarily guarantee academic success in the program, generally more students were successful with them than without them.

Conclusions

Based on the data collected during the program monitoring evaluation, there is no conflict among stakeholders concerning what the YouthBuild program is trying to accomplish or how to accomplish it. There remains fidelity in the YouthBuild program when compared to the goals and services delivered to other YouthBuild programs across the United States. Students are reliably receiving the same services today than in the past, and only the recruitment procedures for students have changed over time. The Omaha YouthBuild program is operating just as the broader YouthBuild programs across the nation, which would suggest that the Omaha YouthBuild program should enjoy many of the same outcomes found among other programs across the United States. This was the case in regard to individual outcomes.

Although one must be cautious when interpreting the results of the outcome evaluation because of the limitations to the research design and sampling framework, data gathered from program participants suggest the following individual outcomes:

- More of those completing the YouthBuild program have found meaningful employment than those who leave the program.

- Successful YouthBuild students feel more satisfaction in their jobs than those who drop out of the program, which infers these students are more likely to keep their jobs for longer periods than those less satisfied with their jobs.

- More students who drop out of the YouthBuild program have been arrested for crimes than those who complete the program.

- There are more out-of-wedlock children among those in the control group than among those who complete the program, which has implications for financial funding for children as well as the stability of families.

- There is a lower job-turnover rate among those who complete the program than those who leave the program without graduating.

- More YouthBuild graduates reported feeling very well trained for their jobs than those in the control group who left the program.

These outcomes should be examined within the context of funding for students in the program and for program delivery. Generally more students had academic success when they received living stipends and/or the program received AmeriCorps funding than when stipends and AmeriCorps funds were not available.

We were not able to survey community residents or leaders as to their perceptions of YouthBuild's impact on communities, but some clear inferences can be drawn from the data on individual outcomes.

- The more high school dropouts can get their diplomas or equivalencies, the more likely they are to find employment.

- The more people finding meaningful employment, the more these people become role models for other community members, thus demonstrating the advantages of conventional lifestyles.

- The more satisfied young people are with their jobs, the more likely they are to keep them, which adds to stability in neighborhoods.

- The more homes YouthBuild students build, the more affordable and long term housing there is in neighborhoods.

- The more leadership skills students learn in YouthBuild, the higher the likelihood of willingness to get married and start a family, leading to people living in the community longer, spending their money there, and helping engage in the U.S. consumer based economy.

Overall, the individual outcomes YouthBuild programs strive to achieve are all outcomes that would benefit not only people, but also communities.

We collected some testimonials that best support and summarize the findings we describe above.

- "This is the best program right now for young people worldwide...it [YouthBuild] has saved a lot of people's lives, and I'm not just saying that, that's a serious fact" (Participant 190).

- "One of the best programs any youth could go through. I would always encourage youth to do this program" (Participant 46).

- "I had an amazing experience. I had great mentors in and out of the classroom, and that meant the most to me" (Participant 21).

- "I learned a lot from the construction training and I am thankful to have those skills. I would definitely recommend this program to other kids who want their GED or want to learn a trade" (Participant 68).

- "They should open more YouthBuild programs in the area because I know how much it helped me. This program helped me to progress a lot in life" (Participant 115).

- "I get a lot of structure here that I did not have at home and I really enjoy that" (Participant 18).

- "I have done so many GED programs up until now that never worked for me. YouthBuild is fun and the people here really care about me" (Participant 17).

Last, data suggest that more students are academically successful when the YouthBuild program receives AmeriCorps funding and when students receive living stipends.

Recommendations

Despite the selection bias inherent in this study and the limitations of not having baseline data on prior students' background, personal circumstances, and social networks, we believe there are some recommendations that can be made based on the findings above.

- We suggest that Goodwill Industries establish a program monitoring evaluation plan that encompasses an assessment every three years of the program to continue to monitor program fidelity, reliability, and individual outcomes.

- As part of the monitoring plan, we suggest Goodwill consider some community based surveys of residents of neighborhoods in which students build homes to determine the impact of the program on communities.

- We believe this evaluation has demonstrated the positive effects of the YouthBuild program on the lives of former high school dropouts and results should be shared with potential donors to solicit the funds needed to increase the capacity of the program.

- Most importantly, we recommend that the YouthBuild program continues to deliver services in much the same way they do now because there are indicators that suggest the program is educating and training high school dropouts for meaningful careers.

- We also recommend this program continues to operate as it is currently because there is some evidence it can help lower criminal activity.

Generally, we recommend that Goodwill Industries continues to look for public and private funding opportunities in order to increase the capacity of the program and the learning and leadership skills of students. This program is supported by empirical evidence that more students find jobs, keep those jobs, and have fewer arrests than students not completing the program. These outcomes benefit not only individual students but also their communities at large. The YouthBuild program is a good investment for any single donor, agency, or private organization that wishes to add quality long-term housing to

communities, increase the employment rate among young adults, and decrease the time

and desire to behave in a deviant or criminal manner.

Appendices

Implementation Evaluation Data: Ten stakeholders were interviewed and eight questions were asked of them. The questions that were asked of the stakeholders are attached as the first appendix. In addition, the second appendix is organized as eight questions with ten stakeholder responses per question.

APPENDIX 1:

- What do you feel is the intended mission and/or goals of the program?
- How is the program being delivered (what are its components, when do they occur)?
- How are program participants selected?
- How satisfied are you in the services you deliver?
- Do you have any suggestions to better deliver this program or serve your target population?
- Do you think local communities are aware of this program?
- What effect do you think this program may have on local communities?
- How long have you been with YouthBuild and how important is funding to the program?

APPENDIX 2:

Question 1:
1. Mission of the program is to change the lives of the students and education, GED, work experience is secondary to that. All about the impact that they can have on the students. There is an alumni group for the students after they leave. They do at least one year of follow up with them after the program is completed. "It's about helping young people turn their lives around. It's really not so much an occupational skill-training program (although that's a part of it), but I think it's helping equip young people with some of the life skills and what it takes to be more successful in life than what they have been. It's more of a life changing focus."
2. It is a skill finding and GED program but the intended person of the program is to build good habits and build good leaders. To provide structure and build positive habits in students.
3. To assist students ages 16-24 who have struggled in traditional settings to be successful. There is a difference between North and South Omaha locations. South works with a school so they try to get them before they drop out. North kids have already dropped out.
4. To equip young people with the tools necessary to make the right decisions and live a healthy lifestyles. It is also a lot about teaching life skills. Not so much about construction.
5. The mission that YB USA has. To take disadvantaged youth and get them on the right track to get their GED and have transferrable work skills. How to show up to work, how to work with peers, how to work in a positive way.

6. He was there from 2005-2007. Threefold. Academic process to earn a GED, development of work skills, and leadership in a sense of service.
7. To help youth with their educational skill and making them more employable with work skills.
8. First part is education and helping them get a job. Teaches them the skills to hold a job. We try to teach them skills to survive in this world outside of their neighborhood. They have no idea how to act. You can almost always see a change in their demeanor. They do not know how to cope. We teach them how to deal with things.
9. To educate the young people that come into the program that they can have a better quality of life. Depends on how much they want to put into the program though.
10. The mission is to work with at risk youth who are trying to get their lives on a better path by giving them skills to work in our community.

Question 2:
1. The three main components of the program are education, job training, and leadership development. Teamwork is also key. Mental toughness is another component. This last about 2 weeks. It determines if the students are a good fit for the program.
2. Mental toughness period weeds folks out. It is like a ladder. Once the student shows that he or she is able to accomplish something, they can move up. They are all at different levels in the program.
3. Northside students really focus on getting their GED and trade knowledge. They get certifications. Leadership component as well. Learning about not just getting a job but retaining a job.
4. It has progressed to be in the best place now more than ever. There is the academic and construction piece. Service learning projects. They are also branching out and doing a lot of other things. Lots of opportunity for projects. It was easy to write the Youth Build grant last time because actual implementation was being done. They have become more sophisticated in how they operate.
5. Classroom component, case management, and construction training. Case manager is involved in both the other components. Teach the kids study skills and how to improve. EFL is a big deal. They do a variety of construction. They have partnerships with Abide and Rebuilding Together. Interacting with the homeowner is good for them. Case manager position just came only one year ago. A key component to having YB is having a united front with the staff. They need to be connected and know what is going on everywhere in all components. They have a daily point system, which is different than mental toughness. This helps them earn incentives. Staff members get together every morning and talk about progress for each kid.
6. Strived towards an integrated working environment.
7. Two main ones, educational and construction. There is a lot more going into it with case management.
8. They go to various leadership-training things throughout the year as well. They teach them how to deal with stress through art and pottery. Teaches them how to calm down. He is responsible for upping their EFL's every day. Fridays are leadership days. Field trips and not teaching.

9. Education is a large component. Other ones are subtle, like social skills and learning how to stay on task.
10. Construction, GED, leadership, and teaching them how to be productive. Teaching them how to carry themselves. Learn how to take an initiative.

Question 3:
1. Not necessarily looking at academics because that is what this program is trying to help. More so looking at attitudes and those individuals who are willing to be engaged.
2. They have to do mental toughness without having too many setbacks. There has to be a unanimous agreement to keep the student. YouthBuild now has a reputation in the community so they can just put the word out there and kids will come.
3. Before even getting to that mental toughness stage, students are referred to the program through other agencies that have had kids come through. Families, schools, etc. YouthBuild has been around and people know about it. The marketing department does a good job of helping with that. There is a certain point where students can't enter any more throughout the year because of the AmeriCorps award. They require a certain amount of hours and money plays a factor. It has to be fair. They only have one year with these students so preparing them through that mental toughness stage is important.
4. (The department of labor is more concerned about education and learning. The HUD grant was more concerned about the house being built. It is better to be under the DOL grant because of the less restrictive requirements. A lot of the structural things that are used in WIA are used in Youth Build. They are both under the DOL now. You can see a dip in performance when a coordinator leaves and when the program is privately funded.) Word of mouth, they have put in an application before... One of the things that was not good was a flier that had dollar signs on it to come to school. Door to door, radio ads were done originally but not anymore. Miriam is involved in the community and attends meetings to spread the word. Kids are now just filling out applications and coming on their own.
5. Word of mouth, they had someone who was already in tell them to come, they get referrals. They had 90 to pick from in this last cohort.
6. There was never any randomized control so that is a challenge. There was always a mental toughness period. They would backfill as they went to bring in more kids when they had space. There was a small secondary cohort that would come into the class when the program first started. Open enrollment would be great to have, Madison, WI has this. They had a sort of hybrid model. This helped them manage attrition. Any notion of running it like a normal classroom is out. There were always kids available. There could have been another cohort back then. Word of mouth is a lot better now then it was then. Used to be about getting money to go to school. UNO practicum students of social work used to come and provide a supervisor position, kind of like a case manager.
7. A lot of time it is word of mouth. Their demand outweighs their space now though. There is an overflow from past years. People in the program from years before talk about it. Youth WIA program serves 16-21 year olds. Not as intensive as YB where

26

they are there everyday. The populations are very similar so there is overlap. Some do WIA and YB at the same time. They try not to duplicate the services.

8. They come to us. Mental toughness is a way for them to see if they can submit to us in a good way. Can they follow rules and see who is in charge. It gives them a chance to see what they are made of. It is a national thing, every YB does it.

9. They come through the orientation process. Mental toughness starts on day one. They have to be on time. It is the beginning of structured teaching. Word of mouth, past participants, radio advertising, etc. are the ways the students are coming in.

10. A lot of it is through word of mouth but there is also media and advertisement coverage. Judges also unofficially sentence kids to YB. Miriam and her group talk to students to see if they are a good fit.

Question 4:

1. Very satisfied. Seems to evolve year to year. There was a good completion rate with the last class. The new GED testing system is very hard. Did not generate as many GED's as we should have but if they do not get their GED, they can keep trying for it. We work hand in hand with Iowa Western Community College to expedite those GED's. Most referrals come from social service agencies, word of mouth, advertising, court referrals. Last month for example, they were getting 3-5 inquiries per day about the program. Advertising is also done for this program through radio ads. Traditional methods were also used, such as fliers.

2. It is a tough population so he expected to find out that these students would not do very well after they leave the program. He would like to see those that were never touched by this program and see the outcomes there to determine if this program is really helping the students after they leave the program. He is satisfied with it on the level that students are learning fundamentals that they can take with them in their lives after the program. He doesn't think it is a life changer. A solution to this would be a team of youth doing projects after the program is done... but then there would have to be a program site for that and when you are doing commercial services it is hard not to make money. Those are limitations. Staff has also changed so that is hard too. When the YouthBuild directors changed, it brings in a whole new concept.

3. More satisfied now than before. There are 5 staff members now rather than 3 and that improves the processes very much. This year looks the best for them because of the staff they have.

4. Pretty happy with it when she was there. The performance wasn't great, it was ok. That is necessary to get grants. Living allowance they can't take away and it is through AmeriCorps. But there is a stipend that is based on their performance that can be taken away.

5. It is a good example of what a YB grant can do. Gives the kid the income they need to focus and not worry about other work. They can only do that when they have the DOL grant. They want us to put hard and fast numbers to how the program has been effective. It is an expensive program so they want to know that it is worth it. It could show that when you do have resources to put behind a kid that they can be successful. It would be nice to have 2 full cohorts. It would be fun for them to make stuff and sell it at the stores. It would be nice for YB to generate revenue, but there are stipulations to that.

6. We could definitely always do better. I was satisfied considering that it was a start up program. The challenge was building it into something that could be sustained.
7. I think they do a great job. I have seen it evolve from limited services to now and especially the last couple of years it has really stepped up. Last year only 3 kids dropped out. There is a need for expansion in North Omaha. You don't want to oversaturate it but there is more youth that need help. YB construction, YB healthcare, etc. There could be different sections.
8. We have come a long way. It is expensive. We change people's lives. It is frustrating but we do the best we can.
9. He takes part in every piece of the program but construction is his highlight. He has seen growth in every year. We are only satisfied for the moment. We always look for ways of improvement.
10. We can always improve. She would like to see a volunteer component added in. Getting tours of actual construction sites is a good idea (they are doing that). Create a mentoring program around YB. Is there a structure that could be mocked that we could duplicate? External volunteers to mentor youth.

Question 5:
1. Well reached. People know what it is. When the window is open for new recruits it is a mystery though. Good or bad thing?
2. No better ideas. They do a good job. Every program can be improved with added structure, involvement from the community, and support internally from the program. A cool thing they do is interviews on Fridays with community members.
3. She wishes they could have bigger classes. Some YouthBuild's serve hundreds per year. They have lots of kids on the waitlist and they have to turn some away because of the class size only being 30. If she could retain the staff that she has right now that would be ideal. When they don't get funded they have to cut positions and its usually the case manager which is very important to the program.
4. Miriam knows how to effectively manage Youth Build so no she does not.
5. It would always be geared towards low income and high school dropouts. South Omaha would not be eligible for a YB grant because they are still in high school.
6. He worked for the program for about 3 years and then he was the grant writer for Goodwill for another 3 years. He doesn't have advice that would be better than those that are working in it now. When he was there they combined the AmeriCorps and Goodwill funding together so it worked well. YB is a model because it is replicated around the country but it is always flexible. He advised to have really well defined practices and policies and incentives programs. Be really consistent with how you handle the kids. Reward them more than you punish them.
7. Probably just more availability. It is hard to replicate something that is going well. Thirty kids is a large group, it can't be larger than that. They would need to start another cohort.
8. They are not micromanaged. I have been teaching 15 years and so I develop my own programs and curriculums. I have the freedom to experiment here. We have a new GED test and no one knows what to do to pass it. He is trying to help make it easier.
9. Alumni are a big asset of recruiting. We should utilize what we have already accomplished. They should go on and be more proactive towards getting more kids.

10. It would be great if we could have multiple cohorts. It is definitely something that people like. We do it well and it is something that people love. People love at risk youth. If the resources were there North Omaha could expand but in a different location because we are at capacity now. We have the partners, just not the space or the resources right now. Miriam has the connections with the community.

Question 6:
1. Yes- at least the communities that need to know, such as JJS: Juvenile Justice Services.
2. Yes. It is the most well known program for Goodwill. In the community it serves it is well known. Outside of that, it is not that well known. Your average person in Omaha probably does not know about it.
3. Yes she thinks greater Omaha is aware. Referral sources are important. Omaha World Herald has made an impact.
4. Yes and no. Other non-profits are aware of it and people they network with already. The general public does not know. They try to educate the community but it is hard to reach so many people. The community could benefit from knowing more about it.
5. Yes there are pockets of knowledge about it. There are still a lot of people that don't know. North Omaha knows about it. They could probably do a lot more in advertising it but then again they don't want to send kids away. It would be great to expand North Omaha with a different site.
6. I think they probably are now. They don't know enough to have a judgment about it. They just know it exists. Since there are so few kids and there is a lot of variation in the programs, people don't really know what it is. Strictly speaking, a YB is a DOL funded and/or YB USA certified program. YB has not reached evidenced-based status yet.
7. Yes and No. Especially in the North Omaha community, yes. More community leaders are becoming part of the program. Especially with the leadership Fridays. It is a high profile program and it is expensive to run so it is being noticed for the right reasons.
8. Yes and no. I think it is spreading and becoming bigger than it used to be. Goodwill has been a good backer for us since they have good advertisement support. Goodwill does a lot for them. YB is not a Goodwill program. It is a DOL, federal program.
9. For the most part we are getting our name out there with our participants working in the community through the services that the young people provide. It was a lot better than it used to be a couple years ago. It is not just the target population that is being served.
10. I think we still have some work to do there. I want to protect YB because I worry there are other entities out there trying to apply for the federal grant. It is a major concern of ours. We just need to be mindful of who we are talking to and how we answer their questions.

Question 7:
1. Hard to say- relying on this study I am doing in order to answer this question. Hoping to discover that we are taking some burden off the social services/criminal

justice department. We will be able to demonstrate whether or not YouthBuild makes a difference based on the information I give them.

2. It is one of those avenues in the community that is serves that is well known to have your child or yourself straighten out your life. They know that if you are willing to commit to it that it will work and that you can get your GED if you put the effort into it. It is a life-changing thing and it is similar to the military in the way because you can't half join YouthBuild like you can't half join the military.

3. If they are in school then they are not robbing me. It takes them away from that crime area. Keeps them busy and make them not want to engage in crime. If they are earning an honest paycheck then they are not relying on tax dollars and public assistance, which also helps the community. They are paying child support and not relying on subsidized housing. My tax dollars should not be paying for a 19 year old who can work. They take pride in their communities and the homes they helped build. The impact of the program as a whole has so many components. This year the kids get $600 per month because of the funding sources.

4. Awareness would be good and financial support. The size of Youth Build makes it successful right now. It is not serving a huge amount but they are not ready to do that yet. At some point they could, but you need to be cautious on how you grow. They cost of each participant is a lot too. There really isn't anything else out there right now that does the same thing at the same support level.

5. It's an option for families to refer their kids to. It could be another resource for the communities and its families. Habitat home dedication is a big deal.

6. Fundraising purposes would be great. They could use the stores to advertise. Working with the school in South Omaha will bring a lot of supporters.

7. It would benefit the community to know more, especially around graduation time or when they are doing community events. More coverage and money means more kids and people like to give to YB in comparison to other programs, which is great.

8. It would make it easier for us to fill a class. Changing the GED has made it much more selective. He can't get you from 2nd grade to college in a year. We have to require a higher level. It is also harder to find people who are dedicated. There are more than 30 out there we just have to get them. They have to take the TABE test before they enter. It is not a pass/fail. It is a guideline and it sets a mark for EFL. They have a functional grade level for every section. If you are below 9th grade level it is harder but he can still work with you if you are close.

9. Grant money could come in but to see their dollars being spent in a more creative and productive way would be great. There is enough of a need in North Omaha to expand.

10. Trying to contain the violence in Omaha and the kids out causing trouble on the streets is how we are helping the community. They see that we are providing this program in order to help eliminate crime.

Question 8:
1. Yes he has been around that long
2. He has been here for 9 years. He has seen a big effect because of that funding. At the beginning it just did not work at all because the program and staff were very bare and not funded. It wasn't the best staff at that time either. Horrible retention. 2008.

The most recent time that they self funded it went a lot better because they had more support for the community. A lot of it was trying to figure out how to run the program and also when you have funding everything runs different.

3. She has been here 4 years. When she came in they were not funded and they had 15 kids and 3 staff members. Biggest difference this year is having 5 staff members.

4. Current position is community development manager. Started in 2005. Worked in WIA program first. Funding is critical but having the appropriate staff in place is very important as well. Those problems are pretty much gone now. The engagement of students is different when they are and are not getting paid.

5. This is her 16th year with Goodwill. She is the VP of Employment and Training. She has always overseen the YB program since the very beginning in 2005. The biggest difference when there is funding and when there is not is the retention of the kids that are in that program. The DOL grant is huge, almost a million dollars for 2 years of programming and 1 year of follow up. Retention was not good when the grant was not there. They might see us as being really progressive with the South Omaha start up and fund them again. It would be nice to have 2 cohorts in North Omaha too so that each could be funded every other cycle and then they could share it or something.

6. When the money is uncertain, the biggest problem is talent, retention, and development aka your staff. You need the best of the best. That is where funding hurts, you don't always get the staff when there isn't funding. Nonprofits can't project what is going to happen in the future like for profits can.

7. I have been here 10 years in December. Started as a case manager for WIA, heard about YB starting before 2005, became interested in that program, became partnership coordinator, moved to quality assurance in 2011 for YB. Working directly with YB since 2011. I work with all employment and training programs to keep them on track for funding and performance expectations. She works with all the programs here. For YB she certifies files, submits federal reports, donor reports, sending out performance evaluations so people see what is going on. She has very limited contact with the YB participants. The class size gets smaller when there is not funding, essentially cut in half. Staff size gets smaller too. They don't get anything to put in their pocket so they aren't dedicated. They need something to pay bills and take care of their families. Fundraising for the next couple years incase they don't get the grant is going really well. They have more than they have ever had of private donations. It would be so disappointing to see funds drop for this program. It is a great program model. Now that it has escalated to be great it would be hard to get back there.

8. Started a couple years ago. Always held the same position. He was a case manager for WIA before this. We have a lot more money and better equipment now that we are funded. It matters a lot. It takes a lot of worry and cost of operation away.

9. This is his 4th season with YB. They asked me to be involved. He creates lesson plans for construction and woodworking. They have different goals each week. One week they might be focused on following instructions and they see how well they do with that. They tell them that their personal life and their professional life need to be in sync with one another. They need to coexist. They try to help them find that happy medium through problem solving. My first year here (2011) there was very little

funding. He had to go around and knock on doors to get money for the program that year. He would educate the community and ask for donations. It was a sort of an "adopt a YB" type of thing. They are still involved with many businesses in Omaha to support YB in this way. Huge difference in that first year and now. I feel more solidified in the program. I knew it was going to be awesome and it is. I know there is 256 YB across the country. My personal goal is to make this the best YB out of the 256, right here in Omaha. Many people ask me how I can work with the disadvantaged young people. It is challenging but it is not a job. It is a lifestyle.

10. She started in August 2012. She is the director of development. She works with fundraising and community outreach, lobbying efforts, government relations. Not in the office a lot. Usually out in the community. They had a large private donation starting in 2012. It was a person who oversaw the boys and girls club so he had a large passion for kids. He donates and comes in to teach a parenting class every year for the kids. I am not sold that we are going to get DOL funding again so I am moving forward with the idea that we need to fundraise for it. We are actively working to always inform people about the program. Sending out a lot to funders. Showing them how their money is being used. I can see a big difference when there is and isn't funding. When you can't pay them to show up, they don't show up. I would like us to try to expand the program since we are doing so well at it. There is very inconsistent numbers and labels for things. We need to be a lot more consistent about how we track things. We gather so much data but I don't know if we are gathering the right data.

Outcome Evaluation Data: Appendix three is attached as an excel file. Three separate categories are shown (control, treatment, and active) with the same questions asked of each cohort.

References

Acosta, Joie & Chavis, David. (2007). Build the Capacity of Communities to Address Crime. *Criminology & Public Policy, 6,* 4, 651-661.

Bridgman, R. (September 01, 2001). I Helped Build That: A Demonstration Employment Training Program for Homeless Youth in Toronto, Canada. *American Anthropologist, 103,* 3, 779-795.

Cohen, M., & Piquero, A. (January 01, 2010). An Outcome Evaluation of the YouthBuild USA Offender Project. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 8,* 4, 373-385.

Greenwood, Peter W. (2008). Changing Lives : Delinquency Prevention as Crime-Control Policy. Retrieved from http://www.eblib.com

Hahn, A., Leavitt, T. D., Horvat, E. M., & Davis, J. E. (2004). Life after Youthbuild: 900 Youthbuild graduates reflect on their lives, dreams, and experiences. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild U.S.A.

Halperin, S., Howe, H., & American Youth Policy Forum. (1998). *The forgotten half revisited: American youth and young families, 1988-2008.* Washington: American Youth Policy Forum.

Heinrich, C., & Holzer, H. (January 01, 2011). Improving Education and Employment for Disadvantaged Young Men: Proven and Promising Strategies. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 635,* 1, 163-191.

Hernandez, R., & National Youth Network (U.S.). (2001). *Youthbuild U.S.A.* Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Youth Network.

Hoffman, Joan; Knox, Lyndee; Cohen, Robert (2010). Beyond Suppression: Global Perspectives on Youth Violence. Retrieved from http://www.eblib.com

Kapp, A. (January 01, 2009). Empowering Young People through Service. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 18,* 1, 8-11.

Lauver, S. C., & Little, P. M. D. (June 06, 2005). Recruitment and retention strategies for out-of-school-time programs. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2005,* 105, 71-89.

MacNeil, C. A. (June 06, 2006). Bridging generations: Applying "adult" leadership theories to youth leadership development. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2006,* 109, 27-43.

Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman. (2011). Designing Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publications.

Pace, A. (May 01, 2013). YouthBuild: Developing a new generation of learners, thinkers, and leaders. *T and D, 67,* 5.)

Patton, Michael Quinn. (2008) Utilization-Focused Evaluation. London: Sage Publications.

Rossi, Peter H. and Howard E. Freeman. (1993) Evaluation: A Systematic Approach. London: Sage Publications.

Schultz, R. (2013). *Creating good work: The world's leading social entrepreneurs show how to build a healthy economy.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stoneman, D. (1993). Leadership development: A handbook from YouthBuild USA and the Youth Action Program. Somerville, MA: YouthBuild USA.

Travis, R., & Leech, T. G. J. (2014). Empowerment-Based Positive Youth Development: A New Understanding of Healthy Development for African American Youth. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 24,* 1, 93-116.

United States. (1997). *1997 application and guidance for youthbuild program.* Washington, D.C: The Dept.

Wilson, William Julius. (1987). The Truly Disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wright, D. (2003). Improving attendance and retention. *From the field: News for and from HUD Youthbuild programs,* 22–23.

Zaff, J. F., Ginsberg, K. K., Boyd, M. J., & Kakli, Z. (September 01, 2014). Reconnecting Disconnected Youth: Examining the Development of Productive Engagement. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 24,* 3, 526-540.