

Examples from the Field: What Two Cities are Doing

Philadelphia Issues 2005 Report Card: Philadelphia has issued its sixth annual Report Card on the Well-Being of Children and Youth. The document declares that the city is “moving in the right direction” on some indicators of children’s health, safety, academic achievement, and overall positive development, and also directs concern to rising violence involving children and youth. Available for download from: www.philasafesound.org/publications/publist_reportcard.php.

San Francisco Develops Community Needs Assessment: The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families of the City and County of San Francisco recently published a thorough needs assessment on children and youth. This document is notable for its thorough attention to disconnected youth, and to cross-system collaboration as a strategy. For example the report makes recommendations including: 1) Creation of an interdepartmental Transitional Youth Task Force “to assess the housing, educational, employment, mental health, and economic needs of ‘disconnected’ youth 18- through 24-years old; and 2) “Public agencies serving children [should] facilitate more partnerships and greater communication among service providers at the neighborhood and citywide level.” To request a copy, visit www.dcyf.org.

Youth Disconnection, Violence, Gangs the Subjects of National Conversations

New Report on Youth Disconnection in Largest Cities: Northeastern University-Center for Labor Market Studies’ latest report based on 2000 Census data and recent trends finds that, on average, 18% of teens and young adults in the nation’s 59 largest cities were disengaged from schooling and work. The rate of disconnection varied sharply across these cities, with the highest rates of disconnection concentrated in those cities with the largest race-ethnic minority populations. The report points to the 25% drop in the teen employment rate as a prime cause, and notes that the rate of disconnection among youth was 40% higher in the nation’s largest cities compared to their counterparts residing in the balance of the nation.

National Mayors’ Summit on Gangs: The U.S. Conference of Mayors recently held a national summit on gangs in Washington, DC. Speakers including several mayors addressed issues such as the fastest growing gangs, building and enhancing collaborative partnerships, and gang “encroachment” into the suburbs. Expert speakers’ main points included:

- ⇒ Steve Nawojczyk, Mayor’s Office, North Little Rock, Arkansas: Communities “must be creative and innovative, be fair and firm, and cooperative and collaborative.”
- ⇒ Gary, Indiana Police Chief Garnett F. Watson spoke about his city’s extensive use of intelligence and technology, as well as coordination with other Chicago-area cities; and
- ⇒ Jay Johnson emphasized the full range of prevention, intervention and suppression strategies in use by the Los Angeles County Interagency Gang Task Force.

For more details on the Summit and follow up activities, see www.usmayors.org/GangSummit2005/

National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



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Senate Field Hearing on Youth Violence: U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Arlen Specter convened a field hearing in Philadelphia in June, receiving testimony from Philadelphia Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson, Pittsburgh Assistant Police Chief Regina McDonald, Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Chief Robert Flores and others. A focus and motivator for the hearing was the 50% increase in violent deaths of young people under 24 in Philadelphia during the first five months of 2005, compared with the same period in 2004. Attending and questioning witnesses were Senators Dianne Feinstein, who referred to criminal street gangs as a “national crisis,” as well as Joseph Biden and Rick Santorum. At the hearing, Sens. Santorum and Specter announced their interest in co-sponsoring Sen. Feinstein’s “Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act,” S. 155. Partly in reference to Philadelphia’s model Youth Violence Reduction Project (more at www.urbanhealth.org/print_friendly/philadelphia_violence_reduction.htm), Commissioner Johnson stated: *“We can’t arrest our way out of this problem. Only a holistic approach will decrease the incidence of youth violence in this City and around the Country. The Police Department has in the past and will continued to partner with other city agencies, religious and community groups and organizations, State and Federal law enforcement agencies, and business and private organizations dedicated to working with our youth. The goal of these partnerships and collaborations is to identify at-risk youth and intervene in the most effective and efficient way with a goal of decreasing youth violence.”*

Municipal Network for Disconnected Youth News

Portland Gathering of Disconnected Youth Planning Sites: Representatives of eight cities, supported in their local strategic planning efforts by the Youth Transition Funders Group, gathered in Portland, Oregon June 21-23 to share ideas and approaches. The gathering closed with a call to build upon the budding “National Disconnected Youth Movement” represented there. Participating in the gathering were teams from Boston, Las Vegas, New York City, Philadelphia, Portland OR, Sacramento, and Washington DC.

Steering Committee Takes Shape: A newly formed steering committee for the Municipal Network on Disconnected Youth has begun meeting by telephone to advise on future directions of the YEF Institute’s disconnected youth program area. The steering committee consists of eight professionals employed by cities or key local intermediaries from across the country, all of whom have a portfolio that includes disconnected youth.

Your City’s Families Summit Preview: Plans are coming together for workshops on topics such as youth at risk, public education campaigns, multi-purpose parks and recreation departments, and promoting family economic success at the Summit on Your City’s Families taking place September 25-28 in San Antonio. **Plan now to attend!** [Click](#) here to download the Summit registration form – register by July 15, 2005 to take advantage of a lower fee of \$350 for NLC members and \$425 for non-members. [Click here](#) to read more about the Summit. Obtain hotel rates of \$149 double/\$155 single at the Westin Riverwalk by contacting the hotel directly at (210) 224-6500 and mentioning the National League of Cities by 9/1/05.

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