



**City of Richmond  
Mayor and City Council  
Study Session on Violent Crime  
Tuesday March 23, 2010  
City Council Chambers  
7PM**

Gun Violence is a complex problem. No one agency or organization can do it or go at it alone. Effectively reducing gun violence requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged and pro-collaborative framework, and the reality of limited and diminishing resources requires working TOGETHER differently.

With the exception of 2008, our first year of ONS operation, gun violence in Richmond over the last 5 years has experienced a significant increase.

**Available data reveals:**

- Richmond's gun violence problem is in fact geographically and socially concentrated in a few highly impoverished and socially isolated neighborhoods
- most victims (and offenders) of gun violence in our city tend to be young African-American men who live in areas of North, Central and South Richmond
- most victims (and offenders) of gun violence consist of **a relatively small group** of individuals who have had repeated contacts with law enforcement
- the population most likely to commit murder and/or become a murder victim is highly concentrated among a small population of active offenders
- RPD estimates that approximately 20 gangs exist in Richmond
- estimates that approximately 500-1,000 gang members exist in Richmond
- ONS estimates that there are between 150-180 individuals that are at extreme risk of being confronted by gun violence at any given time in Richmond

### *Characteristics of those that the ONS focuses its resources*

Those identified as active gun offenders

Those most likely to be victims of gun violence

Have committed prior gun violence and/or have gun convictions

Have possible Gang ties/membership

Live or “hang out” in most impacted communities

Men and women with multiple barriers to positive social engagement and economic development opportunities and often disconnected from services, and service opportunities

Men and women who have come to believe that MURDER is one of the only acceptable or suitable remedies for addressing possible, actual or perceived conflict

Primary client is 16-30 years old

### **ONS’ Role**

--Develop prevention and intervention programs and strategies

--Provide Advocacy

--Resource Development

--Act as a Service Coordination hub for those most likely to be confronted by gun violence

**--Community Capacity Builder – creating an environment where those most likely to be confronted by gun violence have access to improved social, educational and economic opportunities**

### **Background**

In July of 2007, consultants that made up the Office of Violence Prevention Development Team (OVPDT) provided to the Mayor and City Council recommendations proposing the creation of the ONS, a 2-year phased implementation plan for the office, and recommendations for baseline funding from the City’s general fund.

Central to the plan and its recommendations was the development of the office, identifying and hiring staff, developing and implementing a street outreach program, and identifying and creating viable resource development and resource leveraging opportunities. As an intermediary organization inside city government, a primary goal established for this new office was to advance the city’s capacity to be more effectively positioned to successfully reduce gun violence and address the gaps outlined in the OVPDT report.

The plan called for General Fund support of \$1M in year 1, and \$2M in year 2. General Fund support at this level would allow for adequate ONS staffing support to begin to adequately address its mission, and provide sufficient leveraging for attracting external resources. The year 2 increase of an additional \$1M was included to create, implement and support a community driven competitive granting process to be managed by the ONS. The granting program was to have been designed to fund community and faith

based organizations in our efforts to build community capacity to effectively serve those most likely to be confronted by gun violence.

### **Actual Year 1 (FY 2007-08) Funding**

General Fund Support: \$611,000

ONS Staffing: (6)

2 Full Time Employees (ONS Director, Admin Support)

4 Part-time Employees (Street Outreach Workers)

Resource Development: \$470,000 included funding for the following partners:

Neighborhood House of North Richmond – Transitional Housing

Bay Area Peace Keepers – Street and School Outreach

Straight Talk on Prisons – Case Management

Opportunity West – Life Skills Training

Resources Leveraged: \$400,000

### **Actual Year 2 (FY 2008-09) Funding**

General Fund Support: \$828,000

ONS Staffing: (6)

6 Full Time Employees (ONS Director, Admin Support, 4 Neighborhood Change Agents)

Fund Development: \$420,000 included funding for the following partners:

Richmond Police Activities League – Program Coordination and Client Management

Community Based Employment Collaborative – Program Readiness Training

The Williams Group – Computer and Entrepreneurship Training

North Richmond Young Adult Empowerment Center – Computer Lab and Program Support

Resources Leveraged: \$400,000

### **Actual Year 3 (2009-10) Funding**

General Fund Support: \$811,000

ONS Staffing: (9)

9 Full Time Employs (ONS Director, Admin Support, 7 Neighborhood Change Agents)

Mid-year budget challenges resulted in the loss of critical administrative staff.

Fund Development: \$422,500

Neighborhood Change Agents (3)

Admin Support (1)

Peacekeepers (3)

Life Skills Opportunities

Countywide Reentry Planning Initiative

City Reentry Roundtable

## **Partnerships – Capacity Building – Service Coordination**

### *Richmond Community Wellness Collaborative (RCWC) and the ONS Service Support Network*

The RCWC is a collective effort that provides advocacy, service coordination, and capacity building opportunities on behalf of those most likely to be confronted by gun violence. With the City's Employment and Training department, community based organizations that include Neighborhood House of North Richmond, Richmond Police Activities League, The Williams Group, Opportunity West, the North Richmond Young Adult Empowerment Center, and the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program/Community-Based Employment Collaborative (CBEC), the Office of Neighborhood Safety provides leadership and convenes the RCWC in ongoing efforts to promote the education, health, well-being and economic viability of our city's most vulnerable children, youth and families. The following list includes additional funded and non-funded support organizations that are very important to this works success:

- The RYSE Center
- Contra Costa College
- Contra Costa County Health Department
- John Muir Community Health Alliance
- John Muir Trauma Center
- IMPACT Program
- Richmond Project at San Quentin
- KL Hampton Group
- Bay Area Peace Keepers
- Straight Talk on Prisons (STOP)
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentors Foundation
- Project PRIDE
- OMEGA Boys Club
- MASK
- TENT CITY
- CYCLE
- North Campus High School
- Gompers High School
- Kennedy High School
- Mira Vista Elementary School
- Chavez Elementary School
- Praise Fellowship Bible Church
- Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church
- CCISCO
- North Richmond Missionary Baptist Church

*Awarded 2008-2010 California Gang Reduction and Intervention Program Grant (CalGRIP I) -- to increase community based street outreach capacity, case management, life skills, transitional housing, employment development.*

Thus far:

- more than 700 youth received gang prevention services
- more than 240 youth received gang intervention services

- more than 50 youth received case management services
- more than 28 youth provided educational assistance
- more than 20 youth have demonstrated academic improvement/advancement
- more than 15 youth attained high school diploma/GED
- more than 20 out of school youth demonstrated gains in literacy/numeracy
- more than 50 highly at-risk youth between the ages of 17-21 worked up to 181 hours earning up to \$1,493 each

*Awarded 2009-2011 California Gang Reduction and Intervention Program Grant (CalGRIP II)--*

Funding to expand service opportunities for those identified through street outreach efforts from North and Central Richmond to include the entire City Richmond. Funding will provide for further gang intervention, life skills, pre-employment training, entrepreneurship and employment placement for extremely difficult to serve youth and young adult populations. The partners to this grant include Richmond Police Activities League, the Community Based Employment Collaborative, the North Richmond Young Adult Empowerment Center, and The Williams Group. More than 120 additional youth will receive some benefit from this opportunity.

Through the above Partnerships and grant opportunities, the following areas of capacity have been expanded:

- Community Based Street/School Outreach
- Community Based Case Management
- Community Based Employment & Training Alternatives
- Community-Based Entrepreneurship Training
- Hospital-Based Violence Intervention
- School-based Peer Conflict Mediation
- School-based Life Skills for Peace
- Community-based Life Skills for the Formerly Incarcerated
- Employment & Work Place based Skills and Ethics Development
- Prison Pre-Release Life Skills Training
- Virtual Community Resource Center
- Support for victims of gun violence

## **Current Office of Neighborhood Safety Initiatives**

### *Street and School Based Outreach Strategy*

Neighborhood Change Agents (NCA's) are street outreach workers or street advocates who mobilize to address problems and conflicts as they erupt, and help those they serve negotiate employment opportunities, address anti-social behaviors, and tackle peer pressure. NCA's are ambassadors for public safety in the community – a bridge between the City and disenfranchised populations.

The Office of Neighborhood Safety with the assistance of local, regional and state law enforcement personnel have identified 150 - 180 individuals that are believed to be at high risk for being involved and/or confronted by gun violence. Many of these individuals are currently walking the streets of Richmond. Some are currently incarcerated, while others will soon return home to Richmond.

The City of Richmond Street and School-based Outreach Strategy is the first program initiative of the City's Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) implemented in April 2008. This is a relational, non-enforcement based strategy dedicated to assisting and connecting target individuals and their families to culturally competent human, social and economic service opportunities.

NCA/Street Outreach Workers:

- build relationships with those most likely to be involved and/or confronted by gun violence
- provide daily face to face contact with active gun offenders
- provide "life" counseling and/or "route" counseling
- promote positive alternatives to violence
- mediate conflict and broker truces
- reduce fire arm retaliations/provide violence interruption
- serve as a voice of reason/provide rumor control
- act as a bridge for ensuring that systems of care and social services are delivered to those most likely to be involved or confronted by gun violence

The City's Neighborhood Change Agents are also in the community providing information about available training, education, employment opportunities, substance abuse treatment, counseling, housing, and parental assistance.

**NCA Percentage of duty/time allocation breakdown between April 2008 and January 2010:**

55% - focus group interactions – coaching, mentoring, building resources, building relationships

30% - outreach – violence interruption, mediation, deployment/hotspots, spreading message that violence must stop – retaliation reduction activity

5% - attending community events

10% - administrative duties – paperwork, record keeping, training, continuing education, meetings

- 251 active gun offenders reached
- 850 contacts made with active gun offenders
- 675 highly at-risk individuals reached
- 1,441 contacts made with highly at risk individuals
- 2,092 hours logged by street workers in "hotspot" areas
- 138 Parolees assisted
- 103 Probationers assisted
- 105 Fire arm mediations/violence interruptions
- 53 Life Skills sessions facilitated
- 315 Life Skills Participants
- 411 unduplicated service referrals
- 108 school-based student/peer mediations
- 44 participants enrolled in the Richmond Employment & Training Academy

### ***ONS Peacekeeper Program***

The Office of Neighborhood Safety has identified 10 community residents that serve as ONS Peacekeepers. This team of individuals assists the ONS in facilitated peace-keeping activities such as school-based intervention services, parole and probation support, street outreach support, parent support,

and neighborhood and resident support. Each of the Peacekeepers is provided a monthly stipend to assist in ONS violence reduction activities.

### ***Life Skills for Peace (LS4P)***

The Office of Neighborhood Safety facilitates Life Skills opportunities for extremely difficult to serve youth and young adults between the ages of 14-25 most at-risk for being involved with and/or directly impacted by gun violence. LS4P also works with students facing suspensions for violence, youth on probation for violence, and youth detained but not arrested by local police. LS4P provides a peer facilitated (in that the facilitators have similar life experiences, rather than being of the same age) transformative group mentoring dynamic designed to create an environment that teaches and provides opportunities for pro-social behavior through positive peer role modeling, healthy problem solving, conflict resolution, anger management, character development, and life skills training. The intent of these sessions is fostering resilience to the risk factors associated with violence.

This training focuses on:

- The Development of Leadership Skills
- Anti-Violence Education
- Positive Social Interactions
- Coping Skills
- Positive Decision Making

### ***Beyond Violence Initiative***

The Beyond Violence Initiative is a hospital-based peer intervention program that places trained Intervention Specialists (ONS NCA's) who have overcome violence in their own lives to work with youth and young adults between the ages of 14-25 who are recovering from fire arm related injuries at the John Muir Trauma Center. The Beyond Violence Initiative provides an opportunity for the ONS to more immediately address the possibility of retaliation activity when the victim is most vulnerable. These trained Intervention Specialists offer long-term case coordination, linkages to community services, home visits, and follow-up assistance. The purpose is to promote positive alternatives to violence and to reduce retaliation, re-injury, and arrest.

### ***County-Wide Prison Reentry Planning Initiative***

Currently there is no comprehensive or coordinated response to the increasing number of people who are released from prison or jail and returning to the City of Richmond and other locations throughout the county. The Countywide Reentry Planning Initiative is designed to create a coherent strategy that will help Contra Costa County cities to increase public safety, reduce recidivism among its formerly incarcerated population, improve the health status of those coming home and therefore the communities they return to.

The plan will include a detailed implementation schedule as well as extensive evidence of collaboration with key public and private stakeholders. It will also provide a comprehensive and coordinated countywide strategy for providing effective services to the formerly incarcerated; provide policy, services and funding recommendations that will benefit Contra Costa County's reentry population, provide current data and information on best practices and tools that inform policy makers, service providers, law enforcement and the general public about reentry in Contra Costa County. It will also

ensure that a countywide collaborative is in place, is active and prepared to address reentry related issues as they arise; and facilitate collaboration, cooperation, and coordination between Contra Costa County reentry programs, initiatives, service providers and other community stakeholders. Key deliverables of the Countywide Initiative:

- Produce a Reentry Strategic Plan
- Develop a reentry infrastructure in Contra Costa College
- Inventory reentry needs and services in Contra Costa County
- Develop policy recommendations on reentry

## **Upcoming Office of Neighborhood Safety Initiatives**

### ***Leadership Development & Mentoring***

New Leaders Learning Academy

“One Richmond” Summer Employment Program

Voices for the Village Campaign

The Young Latinas Leadership Program

Empowerment Training Consortium “Mental Toughness” Program

### ***Clergy Partnerships and Engagement***

Night Walks

Monthly Community Engagement Forums

Memorials Program

Season of Peace Campaign

### ***Re-entry- Greater Richmond Area (West County)***

Pre-release opportunities for those coming home

Improved coordination and provision of basic social services needed for successful reentry

Pre-release mentors and reentry planning opportunities provided by Community and faith based organizations

### ***Safe Communities Partnership***

Offender Notification Forums

Focused Deterrence including these partners:

City of San Pablo/SPPD

The RYSE Center

Contra Costa College

City of Richmond Employment & Training

Richmond Police Department

US Attorneys Office

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation/State Parole

Contra Costa County Probation

Contra Costa District Attorney’s Office

## **Challenges:**

Limited and decreasing resources available to fund additional community and faith based street worker programs

Limited employment and training specialists available for those most likely to be involved and/or confronted by gun violence (both public system and community based)

Limited life skills and case management opportunities

Limited economic development opportunities – livable wage jobs/intense economic interventions

Under-funded and overwhelmed social service opportunities

Limited resources for program evaluation

## **Final Notes:**

**“The level of crime in a city is in direct proportion to the will of its citizens and law enforcement officers to tolerate it” –President John F. Kennedy**

Gun Violence is not normal – let me say that again – Gun Violence is Not Normal.

Violence is learned behavior, and can be changed

Gun violence can be significantly reduced if not completely eliminated – yes even in Richmond California

Active gun offenders in Richmond are WORTH saving – and most can be saved

Not all gangs are violent, not all gangs are equally likely to be involved in gun violence

The public and private systems MUST “deliver the goods” for these individuals, in order for the communities and neighborhoods most impacted to have any chance of experiencing an improved state of health.

To be successful at changing our current reality around gun violence, we have to be more focused - this must truly be our Priority

We must operate SMARTER and be less distracted by legal, political, and divisive factors within the very institutions designed to address this critical issue. Otherwise, we compromise our ability to create the conditions for saving lives, truly rebuilding community, and improving the health status of our most vulnerable residents.