



Lost Youth: A County-by-County Analysis of California Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24

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**March 2013
Violence Policy Center**

The Violence Policy Center (VPC) is a national non-profit educational organization that conducts research and public education on violence in America and provides information and analysis to policymakers, journalists, advocates, and the general public. This study is funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). Created in 1992 as a private, independent foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. This study was authored by Marty Langley, Josh Sugarmann, and Jennifer Lynn-Whaley, Ph.D. A list highlighting select past VPC studies is below. For a complete list of VPC publications with document links, please visit <http://www.vpc.org/studyndx.htm>.

- *States With Higher Gun Ownership and Weak Gun Laws Lead Nation in Gun Death* (February 2013, annual study)
- *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data* (January 2013, annual study)
- *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data* (September 2012, annual study)
- *Understanding the Smith & Wesson M&P15 Semiautomatic Assault Rifle Used in the Aurora, Colorado Mass Murder* (July 2012)
- *Gun Deaths Outpace Motor Vehicle Deaths in 10 States in 2009* (May 2012)
- *Bullet Buttons: The Gun Industry's Attack on California's Assault Weapons Ban* (May 2012)
- *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States* (May 2012, Third Edition)
- *"Never Walk Alone"—How Concealed Carry Laws Boost Gun Industry Sales* (April 2012)
- *More Guns, More Shootings* (January 2012)
- *The Militarization of the U.S. Civilian Firearms Market* (June 2011)
- *A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America* (April 2011)
- *Blood Money: How the Gun Industry Bankrolls the NRA* (April 2011)
- *Lessons Unlearned—The Gun Lobby and the Siren Song of Anti-Government Rhetoric* (April 2010)
- *Target: Law Enforcement—Assault Weapons in the News* (February 2010)
- *Indicted: Types of Firearms and Methods of Gun Trafficking from the United States to Mexico as Revealed in U.S. Court Documents* (April 2009)
- *Iron River: Gun Violence and Illegal Firearms Trafficking on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (March 2009)
- *Youth Gang Violence and Guns: Data Collection in California* (February 2009)
- *"Big Boomers"—Rifle Power Designed Into Handguns* (December 2008)
- *Clear and Present Danger: National Security Experts Warn About the Danger of Unrestricted Sales of 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles to Civilians* (July 2005)
- *The Threat Posed to Helicopters by 50 Caliber Anti-Armor Sniper Rifles* (August 2004)
- *United States of Assault Weapons: Gunmakers Evading the Federal Assault Weapons Ban* (July 2004)
- *Vest Buster: The .500 Smith & Wesson Magnum—The Gun Industry's Latest Challenge to Law Enforcement Body Armor* (June 2004)
- *Bullet Hoses—Semiautomatic Assault Weapons: What Are They? What's So Bad About Them?* (May 2003)
- *"Officer Down"—Assault Weapons and the War on Law Enforcement* (May 2003)
- *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime* (June 2002)
- *"A .22 for Christmas"—How the Gun Industry Designs and Markets Firearms for Children and Youth* (December 2001)
- *Unintended Consequences: Pro-Handgun Experts Prove That Handguns Are a Dangerous Choice For Self-Defense* (November 2001)
- *Voting from the Rooftops: How the Gun Industry Armed Osama bin Laden, Other Foreign and Domestic Terrorists, and Common Criminals with 50 Caliber Sniper Rifles* (October 2001)
- *Hispanics and Firearms Violence* (May 2001)
- *Where'd They Get Their Guns?—An Analysis of the Firearms Used in High-Profile Shootings, 1963 to 2001* (April 2001)
- *A Deadly Myth: Women, Handguns, and Self-Defense* (January 2001)
- *Handgun Licensing and Registration: What it Can and Cannot Do* (September 2000)
- *Pocket Rockets: The Gun Industry's Sale of Increased Killing Power* (July 2000)
- *Guns For Felons: How the NRA Works to Rearm Criminals* (March 2000)
- *Cease Fire: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Firearms Violence* (Revised, October 1997)

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Introduction: Historical Data and the Effects of Violence

Homicide is the second leading cause of death for California youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 years old.

In 2010, the most recent year for which complete data is available from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), homicides in California were outpaced only by unintentional injuries—the majority of which were motor vehicle fatalities—as the leading cause of death for this age group. Of the nearly 700 homicides reported, 85 percent were committed with firearms. Nationally in 2010, California had the 14th highest homicide rate for youth and young adults ages 10 to 24.¹ (Please see Appendix One for a chart ranking the states by homicide rate for this age group for the year 2010.)

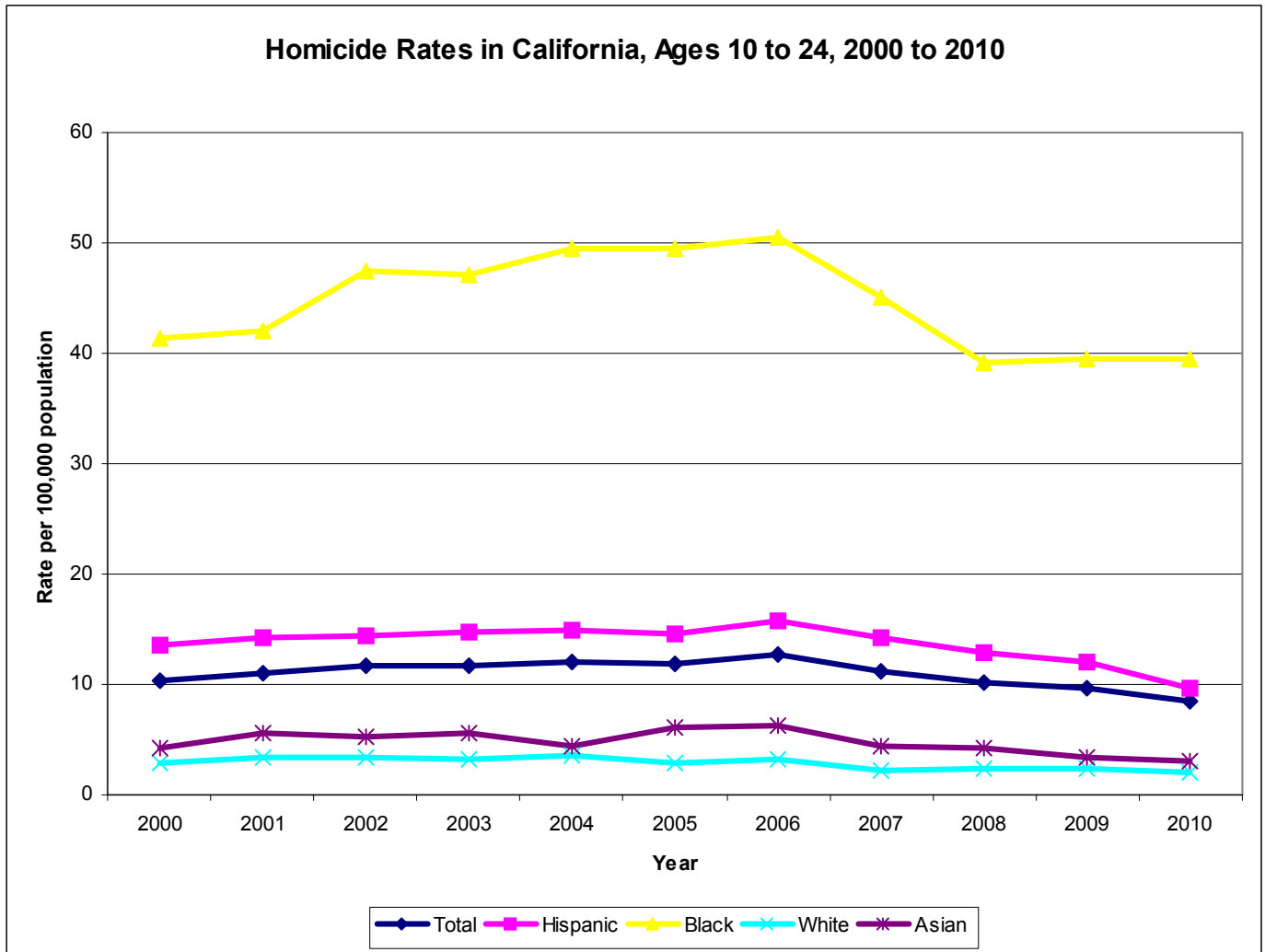
Broken out by gender, homicide retains its number two ranking for males and drops to number four for females for this age group in California. For males, of the 613 homicides reported, firearms were the weapon used in 88 percent of the killings. For females, of the 77 homicides reported, firearms were the weapon used in 61 percent of the killings.

When analyzed by race and ethnicity, however, the rankings become less uniform and the severe effects of homicide on specific segments of this age group increasingly stark.² For blacks ages 10 to 24 in California in 2010, homicide was *the* leading cause of death. For Hispanics it was the second leading cause of death. For American Indian and Alaska Natives it was the third leading cause of death. For whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders it was the fourth leading cause of death.

| 2010 Leading Causes of Death in California, Both Sexes Ages 10 to 24, by Race | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Hispanic | Black | White | Asian/Pacific Islander | American Indian/ Alaska Native |
| 1 | Unintentional Injury | Homicide | Unintentional Injury | Unintentional Injury | Unintentional Injury |
| 2 | Homicide | Unintentional Injury | Suicide | Suicide | Suicide |
| 3 | Suicide | Suicide | Malignant Neoplasms | Malignant Neoplasms | Homicide |
| 4 | Malignant Neoplasms | Malignant Neoplasms | Homicide | Homicide | Heart Disease |

¹ All leading cause of death data and state rankings calculated by the Violence Policy Center using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s WISQARS (Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) database (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

² Race and ethnicity are two separate designations. To calculate Hispanic ethnicity, for all races Hispanic ethnicity was excluded from race data (e.g., white non-Hispanic, black non-Hispanic, etc.). For the purposes of this study, these definitions will be presented without the modifying descriptions “non-Hispanic” and all races and ethnicity will be referred to as race.



As detailed in the graph above, from 2000 through 2010 the homicide rate among black youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in California was far higher than the overall California homicide rate among the same age group.³ The rate for Hispanic youth in California was also consistently above the state’s overall rate for this age group, while the rates for Asian and white youth were well below the state’s overall rate. The rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives are not included because the National Center for Health Statistics suppresses data if fewer than 10 deaths are reported for a given population. A chart containing the supporting data for this graph follows.

³ Per capita homicide rates for specific races ages 10 to 24 years old determined by the Violence Policy Center using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s WISQARS (Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System) database (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

However, in the five-year period from 2006 through 2010, the homicide rate for this age group declined from a high of 12.75 per 100,000 in 2006 to 8.43 per 100,000 in 2010—a decrease of 34 percent. Similar declines were seen in the most severely affected segments of this population group. For blacks, the homicide rate dropped from 50.44 per 100,000 to 39.55 per 100,000, a decrease of 22 percent. For Hispanics, the homicide rate dropped from 15.76 per 100,000 to 9.64 per 100,000, a decrease of 39 percent. For whites, the homicide rate dropped from 3.30 per 100,000 to 2.10 per 100,000, a decrease of 36 percent. And for Asian/Pacific Islanders, the homicide rate dropped from 6.29 per 100,000 to 3.12 per 100,000, a decrease of 50 percent.

| California Homicide Rates for Victims Ages 10 to 24 by Race, 2000 to 2010 (All Rates per 100,000 for Relevant Population) | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--|----------------|
| Year | Hispanic | Black | White | Asian/ Pacific Islander | Overall |
| 2000 | 13.55 | 41.35 | 2.83 | 4.22 | 10.33 |
| 2001 | 14.16 | 42.05 | 3.35 | 5.59 | 11.03 |
| 2002 | 14.47 | 47.49 | 3.36 | 5.33 | 11.65 |
| 2003 | 14.80 | 47.17 | 3.23 | 5.54 | 11.77 |
| 2004 | 14.99 | 49.47 | 3.48 | 4.44 | 12.02 |
| 2005 | 14.53 | 49.42 | 2.93 | 6.03 | 11.85 |
| 2006 | 15.76 | 50.44 | 3.30 | 6.29 | 12.75 |
| 2007 | 14.27 | 45.02 | 2.25 | 4.42 | 11.14 |
| 2008 | 12.92 | 39.21 | 2.40 | 4.27 | 10.16 |
| 2009 | 12.00 | 39.54 | 2.29 | 3.34 | 9.67 |
| 2010 | 9.64 | 39.55 | 2.10 | 3.12 | 8.43 |

Compared to other nations, youth and young adults in the United States have far higher firearm homicide rates.⁴ And often left unstated is the fact that the effects of violence extend far beyond the

⁴ A 2011 study published in *The Journal of Trauma—Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* compared firearm deaths for a slightly different age group, youth and young adults ages 15 to 24, in 23 high-income countries in 2003: “The U.S. age group at greatest relative risk of homicide is the 15 year olds to 24 year olds, and compared with young people in these other high-income nations, U.S. youth have a firearm homicide rate 42 times higher, and

flesh and blood toll measured in homicides and non-fatal injuries. An additional heavy price is exacted on family members and entire communities: the psychological stress of living with such violence can manifest itself as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that can often last a lifetime.⁵

According to the National Center for PTSD at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 77 percent of children who witness a school shooting develop PTSD and nearly 100 percent of children who witness a parent being killed suffer from PTSD. More than a third of children who see violence in the area where they live get PTSD.

Decades of research confirm that children and adolescents who witness shootings are susceptible to prolonged trauma.⁶ Moreover, "...the effects of repeated exposures to violence are additive, with each exposure tending to exacerbate or renew symptoms caused by earlier exposures. Chronic trauma, such as that associated with living in a violent neighborhood, can product particularly severe reactions."⁷

Nationally, children's exposure to shootings rises sharply in both past-year and lifetime incidence from one age group to the next. The federal National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), conducted between January and May 2008, found that while 1.1 percent of children younger than two years old were exposed to shootings in the past year, 10.2 percent of 14- to 17-year olds had witnessed a shooting in the past year. Looking at children who had witnessed a shooting during their lifetimes, while 3.5 percent of two- to five-year-olds had witnessed a shooting during

an overall homicide rate more than 14 times higher. Both young men and young women aged 15 to 24 are at higher risk: young men are being killed with firearms at more than 46 times the rate of young men in these other countries, and females at more than 23 times the rate." Richardson, Erin G., S.M., Hemenway, David, Ph.D., "Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Firearm Fatality: Comparing the United States With Other High-Income Countries, 2003," *Journal of Trauma—Injury, Infection & Critical Care*, January 2011, Volume 70, Issue 1, pp 238-243.

⁵ A 2007 article published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* detailing the lives of children living in an "urban war zone" in the city noted: "The violence, layers of it overlapping year after year, can eventually take up residence in the children's minds. Like combat veterans, they develop post-traumatic stress disorder—the soldier's sickness. As many as one-third of children living in our country's violent urban neighborhoods have PTSD, according to recent research and the country's top child trauma experts—nearly twice the rate reported for troops returning from war zones in Iraq." "Hidden Victims of Violence," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 26, 2007.

⁶ One 1987 study examined 159 children attending a Los Angeles school that had been attacked by a sniper: "They found that one month after the attack more than half of the children showed symptoms of PTSD. At a fourteen month follow-up, those children who were not directly exposed to the shooting showed diminished symptoms, while those children who had been near the shooting or had known one of the victims continued to show severe symptoms. They found that factors which increase the likelihood of PTSD in childhood witnesses of violence include: being physically close to the violence, knowing the victim, and previous exposure to violence." Duncan, David F., Dr.P.H., "Growing Up Under the Gun: Children and Adolescents Coping with Violent Neighborhoods," *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1996.

⁷ Duncan, David F., Dr.P.H., "Growing Up Under the Gun: Children and Adolescents Coping with Violent Neighborhoods," *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1996.

their lifetimes, for 14- to 17-year-olds the percentage rose to 22.2 percent.⁸

In addition to the physical and emotional toll, there are also financial costs associated with gun violence that affect communities, costs that are widely shared among a "...city's residents but disproportionately so by the most economically vulnerable among us."⁹

A 2012 study by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) looked at the cost of gun violence citing 2010 data from The Rand Corporation,¹⁰ which "provides the most recent cost-of-crime estimates, averaged from 3 high-quality studies using different methodology." According to the PERF study, the "most conservative estimates used by RAND were produced by Cohen & Piquero (2009)" who estimated the following costs per crime: murder, five million dollars; armed robbery \$50,000; aggravated assault, \$55,000; unlawful possession, \$500; and, "other" gun related-related crimes, \$500. Costs that were included in the estimates included:

- Victim Costs (lost productivity, medical care, social services, property loss, and a "quality of life" estimate);
- Criminal Justice Costs (costs per offender of each stage of the process, including police costs, prosecutor costs, court costs, and costs of prison, jail, and probation and parole agencies);
- Offender Costs (medical care, costs borne by offenders' families, and loss of any legitimate earnings of offenders prior to incarceration).

One of the six cities studied was San Diego (the remaining five were Austin, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and Toronto). The PERF study estimated that the total cost for gun crime in San Diego for the single week of April 4 to 10, 2011, was \$807,500: aggravated assaults, 11 times \$55,000 for a total of \$605,000; armed robberies, four times \$50,000 for a total of \$200,000; unlawful possessions, five times \$500 for a total of \$2,500. For all six cities, "one week of gun crime generated a price tag of \$38.57 million."¹¹

⁸ Finkelhor, David, et al, "Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey," *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, October 2009.

⁹ "The Social Costs of Handgun Violence," Testimony of Jens Ludwig, Ph.D., before the Chicago City Council, June 29, 2010.

¹⁰ Heaton, Paul, "Hidden in Plain Sight: What Cost-of-Crime Research Can Tell Us About Investing in Police," RAND Corporation, 2010 (http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP279).

¹¹ *Gun Violence in America: One Week, Six Cities, and the Implications*, Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), April 2012 (<http://policeforum.org/library/crime/PERFPresentationonGunViolence.pdf>).

Data contained in the PERF study estimated the costs of firearm crime in 2010 at \$57,926,815,000: gun homicide, 8,775 incidents times \$5,000,000 per incident for a total of \$43,875,000,000; armed robbery, 128,793 incidents times \$50,000 per incident for a total of \$6,439,650,000; and, aggravated assault, 138,403 incidents times \$55,000 per incident for a total of \$7,612,165,000.

This is the third consecutive year that the Violence Policy Center has published *Lost Youth* and it is our intent to continue to publish this information annually. The primary goal of this series of reports is to offer localized information on the county level in California to better inform citizens, advocates, service providers, and policymakers.

This latest edition of *Lost Youth* includes a new section that begins with an assessment of the known impact of “tough on crime” policies (the all-too-frequent default response to violence in general, and youth violence in particular), reviews current national and California-specific prevention-focused violence-reduction efforts, and concludes by highlighting three local California programs that have demonstrated success: Second Chance Family and Youth Services in Salinas; Youth Alive! in Oakland; and, the Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program (GRYD) in Los Angeles.

All too often, the devastating effects of violence are little recognized outside of those who are directly affected. By comparing on a county-by-county level the homicide rates for youth and young adults in California, it is our goal to add a new, ongoing context for information to be presented while helping support discussion, analysis, policy development, and action. Above all, this work is conducted in the belief that information aids in the development of sound prevention strategies—on the local, state, and national levels.

Section One: 2011 California County-by-County Data

This study offers both statewide and county-by-county homicide statistics for youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 utilizing 2011 California Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data (this is the most recent California homicide data available and is separate from the historical data cited in the prior section) and 2011 census data. To help ensure more stable rates, only counties with a population of at least 25,000 10- to 24-year-olds are included. The selected counties account for 98 percent of homicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California (631 out of 641 victims) and 98 percent of California's population ages 10 to 24 (8,014,360 out of 8,188,043) for 2011.

It is important to note that the coding contained in the California Supplementary Homicide Report data used in this report comes from law enforcement reporting at the local level. While there are coding guidelines followed by the law enforcement agencies, the level of information submitted to the SHR system, and the interpretation that results in the information submitted (for example, gang involvement) will vary from county to county. While this study utilizes the best and most recent state data available, it is limited by the degree of detail in the information submitted.

County Rankings

| Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 by California County in 2011, Ranked by Rate | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ranking | County | Number of Homicides | Population, Ages 10 to 24 | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
| 1 | San Joaquin County | 35 | 164,391 | 21.29 |
| 2 | San Francisco County | 21 | 116,400 | 18.04 |
| 3 | Monterey County | 16 | 94,328 | 16.96 |
| 4 | Alameda County | 50 | 297,222 | 16.82 |
| 5 | Contra Costa County | 31 | 210,356 | 14.74 |
| 6 | Solano County | 12 | 87,540 | 13.71 |
| 7 | Tulare County | 15 | 111,674 | 13.43 |
| 8 | Stanislaus County | 12 | 120,963 | 9.92 |
| 9 | Los Angeles County | 207 | 2,166,791 | 9.55 |
| 10 | Santa Cruz County | 6 | 63,850 | 9.40 |

In 2011, the homicide rate among victims 10 to 24 years old in California was 7.87 per 100,000. In 2011, San Joaquin County ranked first as the county with the highest homicide rate among victims

ages 10 to 24. Its rate of 21.29 per 100,000 was nearly three times the statewide rate. San Joaquin County was followed by San Francisco County (18.04 per 100,000), Monterey County (16.96 per 100,000), Alameda County (16.82 per 100,000), and Contra Costa County (14.74 per 100,000). The remaining counties that comprise the top 10 are detailed in the chart on the previous page.

A chart listing the number and rate of homicide victims 10 to 24 years old by county and ranking each county by its homicide rate for this age group can be found in Appendix Two.

An alphabetical listing by county with identical information can be found in Appendix Three.

An alphabetical listing by county with data comparing 2009, 2010, and 2011 can be found in Appendix Four.

Additional 2011 data for the top 10 counties—gender and race of victim, type of weapon used, relationship of victim to offender, circumstances of the homicide, and location where the homicide took place—can be found in Appendix Five.

General statewide findings are summarized below.

Gender and Race of Homicide Victims

Out of the 631 homicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California in 2011, 577 were male (91 percent) and 54 were female (nine percent). For homicides in which the race of the victim was identified (629 victims): 343 were Hispanic (55 percent); 201 were black (32 percent); 51 were white (eight percent); 32 were Asian (five percent); and two were “other” (less than one percent). Overall, Hispanic victims were killed at a rate (8.85 per 100,000) more than four times higher than white victims (2.15 per 100,000). Black victims were killed at a rate (39.79 per 100,000) more than 18 times higher than white victims (2.15 per 100,000). Asian victims were killed at roughly one and a half times the rate of white victims (3.49 per 100,000 compared to 2.15 per 100,000).

| Race and Gender of California Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24, 2011 | | | | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total |
| Hispanic | 322 | 94% | 21 | 6% | 343 |
| Black | 184 | 92% | 17 | 9% | 201 |
| White | 39 | 77% | 12 | 24% | 51 |
| Asian | 30 | 94% | 2 | 6% | 32 |
| Overall | 577 | 91% | 54 | 9% | 631 |

| California Homicide Rates for Victims Ages 10 to 24 by Race and Gender, 2011 (All Rates per 100,000 for Relevant Population) | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Male | Female | Overall |
| Hispanic | 16.11 | 1.12 | 8.85 |
| Black | 70.85 | 6.93 | 39.79 |
| White | 3.17 | 1.05 | 2.15 |
| Asian | 6.40 | 0.45 | 3.49 |

Victim to Offender Relationship

Among youth and young adults in 2011, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 54 percent (172 out of 316) were killed by a stranger. Thirty-one percent (97 out of 316) were killed by someone they knew. Forty-seven additional victims (15 percent) were identified as gang members.¹²

For this age group, black and Hispanic victims were more likely to be killed by a stranger than white or Asian victims. Sixty percent of all black victims were killed by a stranger (50 out of 83). Twenty-nine percent of black victims (24 out of 83) were murdered by someone they knew. Nine additional victims (11 percent) were identified as gang members. Fifty-nine percent of Hispanic victims were killed by strangers (106 out of 180). Twenty-three percent of Hispanic victims (42 out of 180) were murdered by someone they know. An additional 18 percent of Hispanic victims (32 out of 180) were identified as gang members.

In comparison, 59 percent of white victims were murdered by someone they knew (19 out of 32) and 28 percent (nine out of 32) were killed by a stranger. An additional 13 percent of white victims (four out of 32) were identified as gang members. Fifty-five percent of Asian victims (11 out of 20) were murdered by someone they knew and 35 percent (seven out of 20) were killed by strangers. An additional 10 percent of Asian victims (two out of 20) were identified as gang members.

Most Common Weapons

Firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapon used to murder youth and young adults in 2011. Of the 625 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 83 percent

¹² Information on gang activity is provided in two sections of the SHR data and is dependent on how local jurisdictions define and record such data. Although relationships are defined as victim *to* offender, because of potential inconsistencies in on-scene reporting a relationship may be coded as “gang member” if the victim of the homicide *or* the offender is believed to be a gang member. In the circumstance field, it may be coded as “gangland killing” or “gang killing” if the homicide is believed to be related to gang activity, whether or not the victim is a gang member.

of victims (520 out of 625) died by gunfire. Of these, 73 percent (382 out of 520) were killed with a handgun.

| Use of Guns and Handguns in Homicides of Californians, Ages 10 to 24 by Race, 2011 | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | Number of Gun Homicides | Gun Homicides as Percentage of All Homicides | Number of Handgun Homicides | Handgun Homicides as Percentage of All Gun Homicides |
| Hispanic | 283 | 83% | 217 | 77% |
| Black | 180 | 90% | 128 | 71% |
| White | 34 | 68% | 17 | 50% |
| Asian | 21 | 70% | 19 | 90% |
| Overall | 520 | 83% | 382 | 73% |

| Use of Guns and Handguns in Homicides of Californians, Ages 10 to 24 by Race, 2009, 2010, and 2011 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| | Number of Gun Homicides | | | Gun Homicides as Percentage of All Homicides | | | Number of Handgun Homicides | | | Handgun Homicides as Percentage of All Gun Homicides | | |
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| Hispanic | 370 | 315 | 283 | 84% | 88% | 83% | 283 | 233 | 217 | 76% | 74% | 77% |
| Black | 215 | 216 | 180 | 90% | 93% | 90% | 169 | 172 | 128 | 79% | 80% | 71% |
| White | 54 | 27 | 34 | 70% | 61% | 68% | 34 | 18 | 17 | 63% | 67% | 50% |
| Asian | 22 | 15 | 21 | 88% | 65% | 70% | 16 | 10 | 19 | 73% | 67% | 90% |
| Overall | 670 | 581 | 520 | 84% | 87% | 83% | 510 | 439 | 382 | 76% | 76% | 73% |

Circumstance

The overwhelming majority of homicides of youth and young adults in 2011 were not related to any other felony crime. For the 445 homicides in which the circumstances between the victim and offender could be identified, 81 percent (362 out of 445) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 61 percent (222 of 362) were gang-related.¹³

¹³ Information on gang activity is provided in two sections of the SHR data and is dependant on how local jurisdictions define and record such data. Although relationships are defined as victim *to* offender, because of potential inconsistencies in on-scene reporting a relationship may be coded as “gang member” if the victim of the homicide *or* the offender is believed to be a gang member. In the circumstance field, it may be coded as “gangland killing” or “gang killing” if the homicide is believed to be related to gang activity, whether or not the victim is a gang

For all races, the majority of deaths were not related to the commission of any other felony.

For Hispanic victims, 84 percent (220 out of 261) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 66 percent (146 out of 220) were gang-related.

For black victims, 80 percent (96 out of 120) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 58 percent (56 out of 96) were gang-related.

For white victims, 73 percent (27 out of 37) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 37 percent (10 out of 27) were gang-related.

For Asian victims, 69 percent (18 out of 26) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 56 percent (10 out of 18) were gang-related.

Location

In 2011, among youth and young adults for homicides in which the location could be determined, 55 percent (344 out of 620) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Twelve percent (75 out of 620) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Thirteen percent (82 out of 620) occurred at another residence, and six percent (40 out of 620) occurred in a vehicle.

For all races, the most common homicide location was a street, sidewalk, or parking lot. For homicides in which the location could be determined, 60 percent of black victims (118 out of 198), 57 percent of Hispanic victims (194 out of 340), 41 percent of Asian victims (13 out of 32), and 38 percent of white victims (18 out of 48) were killed in one of these locations.

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 31 percent of Asian victims (10 out of 32), 15 percent of white victims (seven out of 48), 11 percent of Hispanic victims (38 out of 340), and 10 percent of black victims (20 out of 198) were killed in the home of the victim or the offender.

Twenty-nine percent of white victims (14 out of 48), 16 percent of Asian victims (five out of 32), 12 percent of Hispanic victims (40 out of 340), and 11 percent of black victims (22 out of 198) were killed at another residence.

Seven percent of black victims (14 out of 198), six percent of white victims (three out of 48), six percent of Hispanic victims (21 out of 340), and six percent of Asian victims (two out of 32) were killed in a vehicle.

member.

Section Two: Hispanic Victims

In 2011, Hispanic youth and young adults were murdered at a rate more than four times higher than white youth and young adults: 8.85 per 100,000 compared to 2.15 per 100,000. While Hispanic youth and young adults comprised 48 percent of California's population between the ages of 10 and 24, they accounted for 54 percent of the homicide victims in the same age group.

Gender of Hispanic Homicide Victims

Of the 343 Hispanic homicide victims age 10 to 24 in California in 2011, 322 were male (94 percent) and 21 were female (six percent).

Victim to Offender Relationship

Among Hispanic youth and young adults in 2011, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 23 percent of victims (42 out of 180) were murdered by someone they knew. One hundred and six victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 18 percent of the victims (32 out of 180) were gang members.

Hispanic Homicide Victims and Weapons

As with youth and young adult homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used to murder Hispanic youth and young adults in 2011. In the 342 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 83 percent of Hispanic victims (283 victims) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 77 percent (217 victims) were killed with a handgun.

Hispanic Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The overwhelming majority of homicides of Hispanic youth and young adults in 2011 were not related to any other felony crime. For the 261 homicides in which the circumstances between the victim and offender could be identified, 84 percent (220 out of 261) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 66 percent (146 out of 220) were gang-related.

Hispanic Homicide Victims and Location

In 2011, among Hispanic youth and young adults, for homicides in which the location could be determined, 57 percent (194 out of 340) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Eleven percent (38 out of 340) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Twelve percent (40 out of 340) occurred at another residence, and six percent (21 out of 340) occurred in a vehicle.

Section Three: Black Victims

In 2011, black youth and young adults were murdered at a rate more than 18 times higher than white youth and young adults: 39.79 per 100,000 compared to 2.15 per 100,000. While black youth and young adults comprised six percent of California's population between the ages of 10 and 24, they accounted for 32 percent of the homicide victims in the same age group.

Gender of Black Homicide Victims

Of the 201 black homicide victims age 10 to 24 in California in 2011, 184 were male (92 percent) and 17 were female (nine percent).

Victim to Offender Relationship

Among black youth and young adults in 2011, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 29 percent of victims (24 out of 83) were murdered by someone they knew. Fifty victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 11 percent (nine out of 83) of the victims were gang members.

Black Homicide Victims and Weapons

As with youth and young adult homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used to murder black youth and young adults in 2011. In the 199 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 90 percent of black victims (180 victims) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 71 percent (128 victims) were killed with a handgun.

Black Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The overwhelming majority of homicides of black youth and young adults in 2011 were not related to any other felony crime. For the 120 homicides in which the circumstances between the victim and offender could be identified, 80 percent (96 out of 120) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 58 percent (56 out of 96) were gang-related.

Black Homicide Victims and Location

In 2011, among black youth and young adults, for homicides in which the location could be determined, 60 percent (118 out of 198) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Ten percent (20 out of 198) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Eleven percent (22 out of 198) occurred at another residence, and seven percent (14 out of 198) occurred in a vehicle.

Section Four: White Victims

In 2011, white youth and young adults were murdered at a rate of 2.15 per 100,000. While white youth and young adults comprised 30 percent of California's population between the ages of 10 and 24, they accounted for eight percent of the homicide victims in the same age group.

Gender of White Homicide Victims

Of the 51 white homicide victims age 10 to 24 in California in 2011, 39 were male (77 percent) and 12 were female (24 percent).

Victim to Offender Relationship

Among white youth and young adults in 2011, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 59 percent of victims (19 out of 32) were murdered by someone they knew. Nine victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 13 percent (four out of 32) of the victims were gang members.

White Homicide Victims and Weapons

As with youth and young adult homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used to murder white youth and young adults in 2011. In the 50 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 68 percent of white victims (34 victims) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 50 percent (17 victims) were killed with a handgun.

White Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The majority of homicides of white youth and young adults in 2011 were not related to any other felony crime. For the 37 homicides in which the circumstances between the victim and offender could be identified, 73 percent (27 out of 37) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 37 percent (10 of 27) were gang-related.

White Homicide Victims and Location

In 2011, among white youth and young adults, for homicides in which the location could be determined, 38 percent (18 out of 48) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Fifteen percent (seven out of 48) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Twenty-nine percent (14 out of 48) occurred at another residence, and six percent (three out of 48) occurred in a vehicle.

Section Five: Asian Victims

In 2011, Asian youth and young adults were murdered at roughly one and a half times the rate of white youth and young adults: 3.49 per 100,000 compared to 2.15 per 100,000. While Asian youth and young adults comprised 11 percent of California's population between the ages of 10 and 24, they accounted for five percent of the homicide victims in the same age group.

Gender of Asian Homicide Victims

Of the 32 Asian homicide victims age 10 to 24 in California in 2011, 30 were male (94 percent) and two were female (six percent).

Victim to Offender Relationship

Among Asian youth and young adults in 2011, for homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 55 percent of victims (11 out of 20) were murdered by someone they knew. Seven victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 10 percent (two out of 20) of the victims were gang members.

Asian Homicide Victims and Weapons

As with youth and young adult homicide victims in general, firearms—especially handguns—were the most common weapons used to murder Asian youth and young adults in 2011. In the 30 homicides for which the murder weapon could be identified, 70 percent of Asian victims (21 victims) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 90 percent (19 victims) were killed with a handgun.

Asian Homicide Victims and Circumstance

The majority of homicides of Asian youth and young adults in 2011 were not related to any other felony crime. For the 26 homicides in which the circumstances between the victim and offender could be identified, 69 percent (18 out of 26) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 56 percent (10 out of 18) were gang-related.

Asian Homicide Victims and Location

In 2011, among Asian youth and young adults, for homicides in which the location could be determined, 41 percent (13 out of 32) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Thirty-one percent (10 out of 32) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Sixteen percent (five out of 32) occurred at another residence, and six percent (two out of 32) occurred in a vehicle.

Section Six: What Works in Stopping Youth Violence

Trends nationwide continue to show overall drops in both violent crime¹⁴ and violent crime victimization rates for adults and juveniles as well as stabilizing rates of gang activity.^{15 16 17 18}

However, a closer inspection of crime trends at the local level reveals that some of the country's largest cities are not experiencing the same reductions in crime rates as the rest of the nation. In some cities, juvenile crime and gang activity have actually increased. According to findings from the U.S. Department of Justice's National Youth Gang Survey, which examined trends between 1996 and 2010, gang-related homicides are up more than 10 percent from 2009 in cities with populations greater than 100,000. The authors of the report note, "Larger cities consistently reported greater rates of gang presence and seriousness of gang crime during the 15-year period."¹⁹ Some of California's cities and counties are among those that have seen increases in youth violence. Despite a statewide downward trend of overall juvenile crime (as measured by juvenile arrests) between 1999 and 2009, many California municipalities experienced an increase in juvenile arrests for violent crime.²⁰ For example, Oakland experienced an increase of more than 100 percent of juvenile total, felony, violent, and misdemeanor arrests in the five-year period ending in 2009.²¹

Historically, such statistics have evoked a "tough on crime" response—resulting in sweeping legislative reforms across the country, including California. The typical response has been to increase the severity and duration of punishment for youthful offenders through suppression and

¹⁴ In the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; robbery; and, aggravated assault. Violent crimes are defined in the UCR Program as those offenses which involve force or threat of force.

¹⁵ *Crime in the United States, 2010*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011 (<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/tables/10tbl01a.xls>).

¹⁶ Truman, Jennifer L., *Criminal Victimization, 2010*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011 (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=2224>).

¹⁷ *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book*, December 17, 2012 (http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/crime/JAR_Display.asp?ID=qa05201).

¹⁸ Egley, Arlen, Jr., and Howell, James C., *Highlights of the 2010 National Youth Gang Survey*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet, April 2012 (<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/About/Surveys-and-Analyses>).

¹⁹ Egley, Arlen, Jr., and Howell, James C., *Highlights of the 2010 National Youth Gang Survey*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Fact Sheet, 2012 (<http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/About/Surveys-and-Analyses>).

²⁰ *Juvenile Arrests in California, 1999-2009: Statewide and local rates and trends*, Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy, State of California, 2010 (www.calgrip.ca.gov/index.cfm?navid=176).

²¹ *Juvenile Arrests in California, 1999-2009: Statewide and local rates and trends*, Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy, State of California, 2010 (www.calgrip.ca.gov/index.cfm?navid=176).

sanctions-based measures. This section of the study will begin with an assessment of the known impact of “tough on crime” policies, review current national and California-specific prevention-focused violence-reduction efforts, and conclude by highlighting three local California programs that have demonstrated success.

Why Not Suppression?

In the 1990s, legislative reforms sought to fundamentally change how law enforcement approached juvenile delinquency. A shift, favoring punishment over rehabilitation, began to take hold. These policy shifts are often referred to collectively as the “adultification” of youthful offenders because of their resemblance to punitive measures typically reserved for adults. These include efforts to: transfer more juveniles into adult criminal court; extend “three-strikes” laws to juvenile offenders; and, expand the criteria for what can be considered “gang activity.” However, a growing body of research reveals that the inclination to toughen treatment of young people involved in juvenile corrections has not yielded the desired outcomes of reduced delinquency and decreased gang affiliation. Indeed, mounting evidence demonstrates that these policies have, in fact, generated a range of adverse effects.

From an economic perspective, these policies have had a “net widening” effect and have driven up juvenile incarceration rates—despite corresponding drops in the juvenile population and overall juvenile crime—creating an enormous and unsustainable financial burden. While one may be tempted to conclude that the increase in incarceration has led to the drop in crime, The Annie E. Casey Foundation report *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration* found no correlation between violent youth crime and juvenile confinement rates at the state level. The 2011 report found, “States which lowered juvenile confinement rates the most from 1997 to 2007 saw a greater decline in juvenile violent crime arrests than states which increased incarceration rates or reduced them more slowly.”²² Nationally, the average annual cost of incarcerating a juvenile ranges from \$32,000 to \$65,000.²³ As a result of “net-widening” policies, more youth are funneled into the juvenile justice system, which derails their education, separates youth from family, and aggravates existing mental health and substance abuse issues.²⁴ Such policies have also had a disproportionate impact on youth and communities of color, where black and Latino youth are significantly more likely to absorb the negative impacts of these

²² *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*, press release, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011 (http://www.aecf.org/OurWork/JuvenileJustice/~//media/Pubs/Topics/Juvenile%20Justice/Detention%20Reform/NoPlaceForKids/JJ_newsRelease_1042011_2.pdf).

²³ *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, Barry Holman and Jason Zeidenberg, Justice Policy Institute, 2006 (<http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/1978>).

²⁴ *Smart on Crime: Recommendations for the Administration and Congress*, The Smart on Crime Coalition, 2011 (<http://besmartoncrime.org/>). The efforts of the Smart on Crime Coalition are coordinated by the Constitution Project (<http://constitutionproject.org/>).

policies, exacerbating the existing problem of unequal treatment of youth of color in the justice system relative to their white counterparts.²⁵

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, “adultification” policies have not demonstrated that they reduce delinquency or gang-related crime—in fact, research has shown that such policies actually lead to the opposite outcome, causing youth to re-offend at higher rates and enabling stronger gang affiliation while incarcerated.²⁶

Punitive Policies Increase Delinquency and Strengthen Gang Identification

The “net widening” approach has swept up many youth into juvenile corrections unnecessarily, in that many of these young people are imprisoned for non-violent offenses. A body of well-established research reveals that youth who are incarcerated rather than offered community-based alternatives do not show reductions in delinquent behavior, and in some cases are more likely to be rearrested than youth who avoid incarceration.^{27 28} For example, *No Place for Kids* reports, “Available studies of youth released from residential corrections programs find that 70 to 80 percent of youth are rearrested within two or three years.”²⁹ Further, a 2004 report examining the causes and correlates of youthful offending issued by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention concluded that while some might argue suppression tactics may accomplish the immediate public safety goal of removing offenders from the street, there is overwhelming evidence that these punitive strategies are largely unsuccessful in stemming future criminal behavior.³⁰ The report suggests that community-based sanctions coupled with appropriate supervision and access to services may result in a reduction in youthful offending. These findings are echoed in a 2007 report from the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, which examined survey results from longitudinal studies conducted in three

²⁵ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

²⁶ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

²⁷ *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*, Barry Holman and Jason Zeidenberg, Justice Policy Institute, 2006 (<http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/1978>).

²⁸ *Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice Annual Recommendations Report to the President and Congress of the United States*, 2007 (<http://www.facjj.org/annualreports/ccFACJJ%20Report%20508.pdf>).

²⁹ *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011 (<http://www.aecf.org/OurWork/JuvenileJustice/JuvenileJusticeReport.aspx>).

³⁰ Thornberry, Terence P. , et al, “The Causes and Correlates Studies: Findings and Policy Implications,” *Juvenile Justice Journal*, Volume IX, Number 1, September 2004 (<http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/203555/jj2.html>).

U.S. cities on pathways to delinquency. The report's authors concluded that in responding to juvenile offending, "A full continuum of culturally appropriate integrated services from prevention through secure confinement and reentry and aftercare, provided in the least restrictive environment" is necessary."³¹ Indeed, researchers at The National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice arrived at a similar conclusion, stating: "...data indicate that incarceration is a spectacularly unsuccessful treatment..."³² The growing body of research on this issue consistently, and increasingly, leads to the conclusion that implementation of sanctions-based, suppression-oriented tactics have not resulted in reductions in criminal activity among youthful offenders.

Moreover, when evaluating the impact of punitive policies on reducing gang-related violence and gang affiliation, the research findings are strikingly similar. Literature on gang membership among youth reveals that frequently a young person's attachment to a "gang" can be temporary and transient. Enacting harsh penalties and widening definitions of who can be deemed a "gang member" for prosecutorial purposes can needlessly draw youth who may not have fully committed to the culture of gang violence into juvenile corrections. These juveniles may otherwise have corrected their behavior with the support of cost-effective programs that have demonstrated success.³³

Additional research details the failure of suppression and prosecution of gang members—as well as other "gang crackdown" techniques, such as those used in the 1980s and 1990s—to curb the prevalence of gang activity or gang violence over the last three decades.^{34 35} An evaluation of a gang suppression strategy in Los Angeles known as Operation Hardcore revealed that while the strategy resulted in an increase in prosecutions and arrests of gang members, it did little to stem gang-related violence in the areas targeted by the initiative.³⁶

³¹ *Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice Annual Recommendations Report to the President and Congress of the United States*, 2007 (<http://www.facjj.org/annualreports/ccFACJJ%20Report%20508.pdf>).

³² Leone, Peter E., et al, "School Failure, Race, and Disability: Promoting Positive Outcomes, Decreasing Vulnerability for Involvement with the Juvenile Delinquency System," National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice, 2003.

³³ *Gang Wars: The Failure of Enforcement Tactics and the Need for Effective Public Safety Strategies*, Judith Greene and Kevin Pranis, Justice Policy Institute, 2007 (http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-07_REp_GangWars_GC-PS-AC-JJ.pdf).

³⁴ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

³⁵ *Gang Wars: The Failure of Enforcement Tactics and the Need for Effective Public Safety Strategies*, Judith Greene and Kevin Pranis, Justice Policy Institute, 2007 (http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-07_REp_GangWars_GC-PS-AC-JJ.pdf).

³⁶ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

In addition to findings that expanded prosecutorial power and arrest of gang members have little effect on reducing gang activity in the community, research has further shown that such tactics may actually *strengthen* gang affiliation, especially among youth who may not have been fully committed to gang membership. Scholars who have assessed gang formation theorize that by being publicly branded a *gang* member, and by spending time with more hardened gang members while incarcerated, youth who may have opted out of a gang can actually develop stronger ties to gang culture, increasing the likelihood of gang membership upon release.³⁷ Further, research suggests that suppression efforts have been shown to, “increase gang cohesion by reinforcing an ‘us versus them’ mentality, and by providing external validation of the gang’s importance.”³⁸

In summary, there is strong and convincing evidence from a range of disciplines over years of research that illustrates the ineffective and in many cases damaging and counter-productive impact of a “tough on crime” approach to reducing delinquency and gang-related violence. As the next section will detail, these policies are not only unsuccessful, but also enormously costly.

Punitive Policies Are Not Cost-Effective

A wealth of cost-benefit analyses show that investments in alternatives to incarceration—primarily community-based sanctions and programming—are far more cost effective and successful at reducing delinquency than incarceration.³⁹ Some scholars have suggested that the government would be wise to dedicate federal crime prevention dollars more toward community-based sanctions and proven programs that target skill building for juvenile offenders rather than continue to support strategies that emphasize harsher penalties and incarceration.⁴⁰

The report *Smart on Crime: Recommendations for the Administration and Congress* canvassed research on “tough on crime” policies from a wide range of disciplines, including economics,

³⁷ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

³⁸ *Gang Wars: The Failure of Enforcement Tactics and the Need for Effective Public Safety Strategies*, Judith Greene and Kevin Pranis, Justice Policy Institute, 2007 (http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-07_REp_GangWars_GC-PS-AC-JJ.pdf).

³⁹ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>) and Piquero, Alex and Steinberg, Laurence, *Models for Change, Systems Reform In Juvenile Justice, Rehabilitation Versus Incarceration of Juvenile Offenders: Public Preferences in Four Models for Change States*, 2007 (<http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/186>).

⁴⁰ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

developmental psychology, and public health. The report found that “public dollars spent on effective prevention and education programs are far more effective at reducing crime than broadening prosecutorial powers or stiffening criminal penalties for young people.”⁴¹ The financial benefit achieved by prioritizing rehabilitation in a community-based setting over incarceration has garnered support from surprising voices in the “rehabilitation versus incarceration” debate. Historically, conservatives have been the strongest advocates for “tough on crime” policies regardless of the fiscal impact or consequences of an increased reliance on corrections. However, the self-described “conservative case for reform” website *Right on Crime* breaks from the “tough on crime” position and concludes that investing in programs that save taxpayer dollars and avert future delinquency is “a positive moral outcome....”⁴²

While recognizing that alternatives to incarceration necessitate significant investments, a report from the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School points to research from economist James Heckman. Heckman asserts that these investments pay off in the long run through their enormous social benefits to the community: savings to taxpayers (incarceration, averted medical costs, and costs saved as a result of redirecting individuals away from social welfare programs); averted violence; and, the redirection of youth away from gang life toward healthy alternatives.^{43 44}

Presuming that lawmakers act on behalf of their constituents’ demands, one might assume that the public generally supports policies that favor incarceration over rehabilitation. However, there is evidence to the contrary. Looking at four Models for Change⁴⁵ states (Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and Washington), researchers examined public sentiment on policy preference and discovered that overall taxpayers view investing in rehabilitation far more favorably than investing in prosecution and incarceration of juvenile offenders.⁴⁶ The authors of the survey concluded: “More respondents are willing to pay for additional rehabilitation than for

⁴¹ *Smart on Crime: Recommendations for the Administration and Congress*, The Smart on Crime Coalition, 2011 (<http://besmartoncrime.org/>). The efforts of the Smart on Crime Coalition are coordinated by the Constitution Project (<http://constitutionproject.org/>).

⁴² Right on Crime website (<http://www.rightoncrime.com/priority-issues/juvenile-justice/>).

⁴³ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

⁴⁴ Heckman, James and Masterov, Dimitri, *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*, 2004 (http://www.ced.org/docs/summary/summary_heckman.pdf).

⁴⁵ “Models for Change supports a network of government and court officials, legal advocates, educators, community leaders, and families working together to ensure that kids who make mistakes are held accountable and treated fairly throughout the juvenile justice process. We provide research-based tools and techniques to make juvenile justice more fair, effective, rational and developmentally-appropriate,” (<http://www.modelsforchange.net/index.html>).

⁴⁶ Piquero, Alex and Steinberg, Laurence, *Rehabilitation Versus Incarceration of Juvenile Offenders: Public Preferences in Four Models for Change States*, Models for Change, Systems Reform In Juvenile Justice, 2007 (<http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/186>).

additional punishment, and the average amount in additional annual taxes that respondents are willing to pay for rehabilitation is almost 20% greater than it is for incarceration (\$98.49 versus \$84.52).⁴⁷ Such findings comport with the results of other public opinion polls that show that the public favors rehabilitation over incarceration for youth and juvenile offenders. These public opinion results are heartening in that they appear to align with what research suggests. Additionally, they offer legislators feedback regarding constituent preference for shifting funding priorities toward approaches that focus more on intervention and prevention.

National and Statewide Initiatives Shift from Punishment to Prevention

There is a growing consensus that it is not fiscally responsible, nor is it sound policy practice, for communities to try to arrest their way out of youth and gang violence. The arguments in support of prevention efforts have gathered momentum, and this shift away from punishment is reflected in federal and state efforts targeted at reducing such violence.

Federal Initiatives

“Youth PROMISE Act”

One example of how the wealth of research related to prioritizing rehabilitation over incarceration has led to proposed policy changes can be seen in the Youth PROMISE Act, federal legislation first introduced by Representative Robert “Bobby” Scott (D-VA) in 2009.⁴⁸ The Youth PROMISE Act stands for Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education, and seeks to institute a number of measures aimed at curbing “youth violence, gang crime, and juvenile incarceration by promoting a more holistic form of juvenile justice that targets high-risk youth and tries to offer real alternatives to incarceration.”⁴⁹ Specifically, the Act would empower local jurisdictions to invest in the implementation of evidence-based programs that offer intervention, prevention, and treatment services to at-risk and justice-involved juveniles and young adults. The Act calls for the coordination of local stakeholders involved in youth welfare to “assist the [federal] Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in: (1) assessing and developing standards and evidence-based practices to prevent juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity;

⁴⁷ Piquero, Alex and Steinberg, Laurence, *Rehabilitation Versus Incarceration of Juvenile Offenders: Public Preferences in Four Models for Change States*, Models for Change, Systems Reform In Juvenile Justice, 2007 (<http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/186>).

⁴⁸ See H.R. 1064, 111th Cong. (2009), S. 435, 111th Cong. (2009).

⁴⁹ “The Youth PROMISE Act: A brief overview,” The Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason University (http://s3.amazonaws.com/chssweb/documents/8202/original/YPA_brief_and_key_points_v2.pdf?1331066102).

and (2) collecting data in designated geographic areas to assess the needs and existing resources for juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention.”⁵⁰

Notably, the legislation takes into account the research findings discussed earlier in this section. And while the scope of its reforms would apply to the nation, lawmakers and advocates in California played a key role in developing the content of the bill. Representative Scott met with advocates and local government officials in Los Angeles and San Francisco—two of what would ultimately become numerous cities that have passed resolutions in support of the legislation. According to Bobby Vassar, Minority Chief Counsel, U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security and legislative aide to Representative Scott, California was “pivotal” in demonstrating early support for the bill. Vassar noted that the endorsement by the Los Angeles City Council was particularly crucial, stating that “when the gang capital of the country adopts your strategy, you know you’re on the right path.”⁵¹

In addition to Los Angeles and San Francisco, cities and counties across the country that have endorsed the legislation include: Pasadena, California; Santa Fe County, New Mexico; New York, New York; East Cleveland, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Norfolk, Virginia; Newport News, Virginia; and, Hampton, Virginia. In addition, a coalition of more than 250 national, state, and local organizations has voiced support for the Act. At the end of the 111th Congress, the bill had 235 co-sponsors in the House (including 19 Republicans). Companion legislation in the Senate had 15 co-sponsors.^{52 53}

Other Federal Initiatives

Other federal initiatives such as the Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program (CBVP) of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the White House-led National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention are playing out at the state level in California. Through the CBVP program, funds were awarded to the city of Oakland to put in place a multi-disciplinary violence reduction strategy that involves the coordinated efforts of local agencies and community groups to implement evidence-based practices. The website from the national evaluators of the CBVP program states that the strategy that underlies the program focuses on “...detering violent behavior by working directly with high-risk youth and gang offenders, by setting clear standards for their behavior, and by

⁵⁰ “The Youth PROMISE Act: A brief overview,” The Cochrane Collaboration College for Policy at George Mason University (http://s3.amazonaws.com/chssweb/documents/8202/original/YPA_brief_and_key_points_v2.pdf?1331066102).

⁵¹ Telephone interview with Bobby Vassar, conducted on October 19, 2012.

⁵² The Act was introduced in the Senate by Senators Robert Casey (D-PA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME).

⁵³ See http://www.bobbyscott.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=291&Itemid=111.

providing appropriate pro-social opportunities for youth in the neighborhoods affected by violence.”⁵⁴

Oakland has established a strong street outreach effort that works with the Oakland Police Department and many community-based organizations to address violence and gang activity among youth and young adults.

The California cities of San Jose and Salinas are two of 10 cities that were selected to participate in the Forum on Youth Violence Prevention.⁵⁵ The Forum was spearheaded by the Obama administration and, in partnership with multiple federal agencies, the effort aims to start a national conversation about youth violence and gang-related crime affecting the nation’s youth.⁵⁶ The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of California describes the goal of the Forum: “The administration created the Forum as a context for participating localities to share challenges and promising strategies with each other and to explore how federal agencies can better support local efforts.”⁵⁷ Similar to the CBVP, the Forum hopes to achieve these goals through the collaboration of numerous government agencies, corporate partners, non-profit groups, and community and faith-based organizations.

At the Local Level

As further evidence of the increasing acceptance of prevention over punishment in youth violence prevention, the city of Los Angeles took steps to extend summer employment opportunities for youth listed on gang databases and gang injunctions. Recognizing that justice-involved youth would benefit from increased access to employment, in 2010 the Mayor’s Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development eliminated language from the application for the city’s summer youth jobs program that had previously excluded them. Moreover, a proposed \$1.4 million cut by the Los Angeles City Council to the city’s total budget of \$24 million for gang prevention and intervention programming was scuttled.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ The national evaluators of the CBVP program are Dr. Jeffrey Butts of The City University of New York’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Research and Evaluation Center, and Dr. Caterina Roman of Temple University. Additional information on the evaluation can be accessed online at <http://johnjayresearch.org/rec/projects/cbvp/>.

⁵⁵ The other Forum cities include: Detroit, Boston, Chicago, and Memphis. The Forum was recently expanded on September 19, 2012, to include four additional cities: New Orleans, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Camden, N.J.

⁵⁶ See National Forum on Youth Violence (<http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/youth-topics/preventing-youth-violence>) and Department of Justice Press Release (<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2012/September/12-ag-1135.html>).

⁵⁷ The Northern District of California, Office of the Attorney General’s website on the National Forum on Youth Violence (<http://www.justice.gov/usao/can/programs/nationalforum.html>).

⁵⁸ “California—Los Angeles Removes Obstructions to Summer Employment Opportunities for Youth on Gang Databases; Proposed Cuts to Gang Prevention Programs Quashed,” *Advances in Juvenile Justice*

These efforts offer examples of the progress that has been made in terms of national policy to shift funding priorities behind prevention strategies, and support local jurisdictions in developing cross-agency and community partnerships to better serve at-risk and justice-involved youth and young adults.

What Works in Juvenile Violence Prevention?

A substantial and expanding collection of academic literature points to the effectiveness of community-based alternatives to incarceration in stemming juvenile delinquency and gang involvement. Scholars are in agreement that programs with demonstrated success in offering critical “pro-social” skills, mental health resources, and opportunities for academic engagement are strongly associated with reducing juvenile delinquency—and are likely to offer alternative paths for those youth most susceptible to gang involvement.

Turning attention to the programs themselves, there are a number of resources for determining characteristics for successful intervention and prevention. Because the needs of individual youth and juveniles are varied, so too are programmatic options. Drawing on evaluations conducted on promising and successful community-based alternatives, there are a number of key characteristics that all programs regardless of focus, should strive to incorporate. The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School report isolates three critical factors that interventions working to stem delinquency should contain.⁵⁹ Excerpted from their report,⁶⁰ these factors include:

- (1) Programs that are successful in reducing criminal involvement among low-income boys in particular begin in pre-school and are sustained over time, through middle and high school.
- (2) Successful programs include families, schools and communities, thereby providing a “web” of support and protection around children.
- (3) Successful programs focus both on individual development and on teaching children the social and cultural skills they need to successfully navigate within their schools and communities.

Reform: Gangs, 2010, National Juvenile Justice Network (<http://www.njjn.org/our-work/juvenile-justice-reform-advances-gangs>).

⁵⁹ The report references a number of studies in recent years from an array of disciplines including: the American Psychological Association; the Washington State Institute for Public Policy; the Social Development Research Group of Seattle, Washington; and, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/Publications/Item.aspx?id=100012>).

⁶⁰ *No More Children Left Behind Bars: A Briefing on Youth Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention*, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School, 2008 (<http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/2008/03/no-more-children-left-behind-bars/>).

These programs, if effectively implemented, are able to redirect the lives of at-risk youth and young adults—away from gangs and toward academic success and healthier lifestyles.

Examples of Successful Programs in Three California Cities

While all too often media coverage remains driven by an “if it bleeds, it leads” mentality that has little time for, nor interest in, day-in and day-out community-based efforts to reduce youth violence, there are a number of organizations that operate promising and successful prevention and intervention programs. This section highlights three local California efforts from Salinas, Oakland, and Los Angeles, describes their programmatic components, and offers a review of their challenges and successes.

Second Chance Family and Youth Services, Salinas, California⁶¹

“Crime pays for prison construction and guards. Without rehabilitation, they will just learn how to be a better criminal.”

Program Description In 1989, Brian Contreras and a group of community members in Salinas, California, began a small-scale street outreach program to try to address the widespread issue of youth and gang violence that threatened to devastate their neighborhood. Their efforts gathered steam, and with the support of local grants and private donations, the group was able to expand its work and increase community partnerships. As the program evolved, it took the name Second Chance Family and Youth Services (Second Chance). According to Contreras, the program currently operates through three principal channels: providing street outreach and reducing retaliations; working with community-based partners and law enforcement; and, facilitating a curriculum that focuses on a “healing-based” approach.⁶² The staff is bilingual and bicultural and is comprised of individuals who have had first-hand experience with gang culture and incarceration as well as those who have not. Staff receive training in the areas of adolescent development, substance and alcohol abuse, grief counseling, and current gang intervention practices to ensure that they are able to provide the most appropriate services to their clients.

What Makes it Successful? One of the key ingredients to the success that Second Chance has had in working with youth and young adults is that the organization actively recruits former gang members to work with clients. As someone who was once incarcerated himself, Contreras credits these individuals with having unique skills and perspective on the issues youth and young adults experience. Contreras also points to their use of a curriculum that incorporates a “healing-based” approach as another cornerstone of their success. This curriculum allows youth and young adults to help uncover the underlying pain and adversity that the majority of their clients has experienced. It also introduces participants to new definitions of what it means to be a “warrior”—encouraging clients to shift from the perspective that a warrior “plant seeds” (fathers children with multiple partners) and uses weapons to resolve disputes to the position that a warrior “protects his village” (community), respects women, and fulfills the duty of fatherhood.

⁶¹ See Second Chance Family and Youth Services at <http://www.scyp.org/>.

⁶² Telephone interview with Brian Contreras conducted on October 19, 2012.

Contreras feels strongly that the punitive approach to gang and youth violence is not an appropriate response. Drawing on his own experience with incarceration, he says he “took what he learned in prison, and brought that out—what *not* to do” to help prevent others from making the same mistakes. He supports the idea of investing “upstream, rather than downstream” and making sure that rehabilitation and other services are available in both prison-based and community-based settings. In summarizing his thoughts, Contreras notes, “Crime pays for prison construction and guards. Without rehabilitation, they will just learn how to be a better criminal.”

The availability of programs and resources are critical in communities where violence is concentrated, however it is crucial that the residents feel some connection to the organizations offering the services. Contreras believes that active participation from community members, such as the former gang members that Second Chance employs and trains to work with youth and young adults, are key to successful outcomes. Contreras notes, “I can drive a bus full of programs in, but if the residents don’t own it, nothing will change.” Reaching this population can be a challenge, and Contreras offers that there are windows of heightened receptivity for intervention such as the period immediately following a shooting or death of a close friend or family member. At these times his staff is able to offer support, grief counseling, and connect individuals with services, adding “the sooner the better.”

In looking to the future of his organization and the work they do, Contreras discusses two issues that would allow Second Chance to improve their services. The first relates to his wish that more foundations would follow the lead of The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF) and The California Endowment by offering more funding for core support and for longer periods of time. Typical grants last one to two years—Contreras says that he would like to see grants that run closer to three to five years so that initiatives have the opportunity to become fully operational before they need to seek additional funds. His second hope is that the wealth of research regarding harmful punitive juvenile corrections legislation will prevail, and that the portions of California’s Proposition 21, passed in 2000, that increase juvenile penalties will be overturned.⁶³ In his words, “Proposition 21 does nothing but waste more lives.”

⁶³ From a summary of the legislative changes enacted through Proposition 21, prepared by the California Legislative Analyst’s Office: “This measure makes various changes to laws specifically related to the treatment of juvenile offenders. In addition, it changes laws for juveniles and adults who are gang-related offenders, and those who commit violent and serious crimes. Specifically, it: requires more juvenile offenders to be tried in adult court; requires that certain juvenile offenders be held in local or state correctional facilities; changes the types of probation available for juvenile felons; reduces confidentiality protections for juvenile offenders; increases penalties for gang-related crimes and requires convicted gang members to register with local law enforcement agencies; and, increases criminal penalties for certain serious and violent offenses (http://www.lao.ca.gov/ballot/2000/21_03_2000.html).

Youth Alive!, Oakland, California⁶⁴

“You can’t arrest someone out of emotional anger.”

Program Description Based in Oakland, California, Youth Alive! was founded in 1991. The organization operates three initiatives that, individually and collectively, aim to reduce youth violence and gang activity. The three programs are “Teens on Target,” “Caught in the Crossfire,” and, the “Khadafy Washington Project.”

“Teens on Target” (TNT) recruits young people from neighborhoods most affected by violence to become leaders in the violence prevention movement. Training them to become Peer Educators, they work with community leaders and engage middle and high school students by facilitating violence-reduction workshops. “Caught in the Crossfire” employs young adults who have prevailed over their own history of violence to offer intervention services to youth recovering in a hospital setting from violent injuries. These “intervention specialists” are trained to provide sustained case management, referrals to community resources, mentoring, and home visits to youth in an effort to help them recover from injuries, and reduce retaliation, re-injury, and arrest. “Caught in the Crossfire” was the first hospital-based intervention program in the country, and its success has resulted in the founding of the National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs.⁶⁵ The “Khadafy Washington Project”⁶⁶ works to provide guidance and counseling to the family and friends of homicide victims by: calming tensions to dissuade retaliatory violence; offering emotional support and guidance immediately after a traumatic event; and, assisting survivors with practical and financial assistance.⁶⁷

What Makes It Successful? Executive Director Anne Marks attributes much of Youth Alive!’s success to the unifying principal that drives all of its programs: the incorporation of the youth and young adults in leadership roles. She asserts, “Young people aren’t the problem, they’re the solution. There is an enormous amount of resilience and untapped talent in these communities, but they haven’t had the opportunity to do anything. When you provide the opportunity they can really shine.”⁶⁸ The practice of recruiting young people from their own neighborhoods to carry the violence-reduction message has many benefits, such as involving residents in resolving

⁶⁴ See Youth Alive! at <http://www.youthalive.org/>.

⁶⁵ From the National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (NNHVIP) website, “Violence prevention and intervention programs are a powerful way to stop the revolving door of violent injury in our hospitals. Engaging patients in the hospital, during their recovery, is a golden opportunity to change their lives and reduce retaliation and recidivism. The National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (NNHVIP) brings together the best and most exciting programs to share knowledge, develop best practices, collaborate on research, affect policy change, and more,” (<http://www.youthalive.org/national-network/> and <http://nnhvip.org/>).

⁶⁶ “The program was named after the murdered teenage son of the program’s founder, Marilyn Washington Harris,” (<http://www.youthalive.org/khadafy-washington-project/>).

⁶⁷ See <http://www.youthalive.org/khadafy-washington-project/>.

⁶⁸ Telephone interview with Anne Marks, conducted on October 23, 2012.

problems that arise within their community. This, in turn, translates to a sense of ownership within the community. Further, because the message is carried by someone from the community, as opposed to an outsider, they understand the community dynamic. And finally, by empowering youth and young adults with leadership roles, some of which are paid positions, Youth Alive! provides jobs and volunteer opportunities that expose youth to the field of social welfare.

Marks also draws a division between the type of violence that is organized or economically motivated and what she sees in Oakland, which she characterizes more as crimes of opportunity, retaliatory in nature, and largely the result of interpersonal matters. From this perspective, she sees little value in relying on the traditional strategies of suppression and punishment to combat community violence, noting, “You can’t arrest someone out of emotional anger.” In her view, resolving high levels of community and gang violence involves efforts that span a variety of services, including linking youth and young adults to mental health and substance abuse resources, mentorship and long-term case management, and general support as they transition from a culture of violence to a healthier life path. Recognizing that the young people in Oakland’s most afflicted neighborhoods respond to the violence with the only tools they see around them, Marks notes, “Carrying a gun, joining a gang—these are things that *feel* protective, but aren’t. Every situation becomes potentially lethal.” The key to changing these norms, she says, is to work at the individual level and bring them to the point where they’re ready to move their life in a different direction. As an example of the kind of impact a one-on-one relationship can have on a client, a 22-year-old victim of a gunshot wound reflected on the relationship with his “Caught in the Crossfire” case manager, “The case manager from Youth Alive! exceeded my expectations. At first I didn’t think it was going to be much, and I didn’t want to talk to someone about what happened. Without my case manager, I would’ve healed physically, but not emotionally. It’s been nearly a year and I still speak with him once a week. He will be at my wedding one day.”⁶⁹

The Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) Program, Los Angeles, California⁷⁰

“One of our main goals is to have tattoos see human beings behind the badge, and vice versa.”

Program Description The Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program, or GRYD, represents a multifaceted approach to the high levels of youth and gang violence in Los Angeles. GRYD is managed through the Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development by Deputy Mayor Guillermo Cespedes, who is the main architect behind the program. While its current structure reflects years of refinement after its inception in 2007, the GRYD Program involves several components, including: the

⁶⁹ Telephone interview with “Caught in the Crossfire” services recipient, conducted on October 24, 2012.

⁷⁰ The City of Los Angeles Mayor’s Office for Gang Reduction, GRYD (<http://mayor.lacity.org/issues/gangreduction/index.htm>).

Multigenerational Family Gang Prevention program; the Gang Intervention Incident Response strategy; a Case Management effort; the Summer Night Lights program; and, LA VITA, the LA Violence Intervention Training Academy. Together, these programs form a comprehensive approach to violence and gang reduction in the city of Los Angeles. Through these strategies, GRYD has three fundamental objectives: to improve prevention by reaching out to at-risk youth and young adults; to provide intervention services to help those transitioning from gangs; and, to offer crisis intervention and outreach to those afflicted by the violence. While the emphasis in Los Angeles has shifted to prevention through the efforts of the GRYD Program, GRYD staff work in concert with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), and when public safety is at risk, the LAPD responds to those who engage in illegal activity. Currently, the programs offered through GRYD exist in 12 GRYD Zones, including 24 parks, defined as areas of the city where violence is most highly concentrated.

What Makes It Successful? More than any other aspect of the GRYD Program, Deputy Mayor Cespedes attributes the success the city has achieved to two primary philosophical shifts.⁷¹ The first is a high-level change in the entire orientation toward youth and gang violence, involving a shift of focus away from the *identity* of the individual to concentrating on the *behavior* of the individual. Cespedes likens this theory of change to looking through a lens. When the lens is changed from one that looks at an individual's pathology to one that examines an individual's relational networks, it is possible to change behavior by changing the relationships, such that whatever problems exist in the prior relationship change as well. This approach represents a stark departure from the way in which young people have historically been viewed by law enforcement. Historically, the very nature of contact with law enforcement rests on the classification of crimes and criminals, assigning labels to an individual based on his or her behavior. Turning this on its head, Cespedes seeks to reshape the dynamic of interaction with this population such that the networks of relationships are center stage. Working within these networks involves the comprehensive approach prescribed in GRYD, engaging the whole community to stem violence.

A second and profound shift in Cespedes' approach in Los Angeles has to do with the role of law enforcement. Historically, there has been an often-overlooked tension between police and the providers of community-based services. Because providers largely operate from a therapeutic orientation, and police from a public-safety perspective, the two often found themselves at odds when their populations overlapped. However, under the GRYD Program, Cespedes has worked to reconceptualize the idea of "community stakeholder" as one that is inclusive of law enforcement. He urges providers to incorporate the police in all aspects of the GRYD Program's comprehensive strategy and not only during a crisis. He summarizes this shift with language borrowed from law enforcement, "One of our main goals is to have tattoos see human beings behind the badge, and vice versa." It is his hope that through these efforts, law enforcement will be seen as an integral part of the community.

⁷¹ Telephone interview with Guillermo Cespedes, conducted on October 21, 2012. See also: http://mayor.lacity.org/PressRoom/LACITYP_006148; <http://mayor.lacity.org/Issues/GangReduction/index.htm>; <http://mayor.lacity.org/Issues/GangReduction/SummerNightLights/Index.htm>; and, *The City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD): Comprehensive Strategy*, Cespedes, Guillermo, MSW and Herz, Denise C., Ph.D., December 2011.

The GRYD Program has undergone external evaluation by the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Institute (UI), which has found that significant progress has occurred across many of their programs. In 2011, an assessment of the Intervention component revealed that the crime rate in Los Angeles is the lowest it has been since 1959, and that between 2007 and 2011, gang-related violence cumulatively decreased across all GRYD Zones. In looking at the Prevention component, UI discovered that nearly 50 percent of program participants reported reductions in risk factors and negative behavior. The Summer Night Lights program⁷² experienced similar reductions in violent crime. Comparing data from 2007 to 2011, researchers revealed: a 35 percent drop for gang-related Part I crimes across all Summer Night Lights locations combined; a 35 percent drop in gang-related homicides; a 43 percent drop in aggravated assaults; and, a 55 percent reduction in shots fired. These findings represent not only that the comprehensive approach is producing the intended outcomes, but also that the philosophical shift in orientation prescribed by Cespedes has traction—both of which are measures of success.⁷³

Looking to the future, Cespedes acknowledged the vast amount of work that remains to be accomplished, and shared an experience that pushes him toward that goal. About a year ago, he had arrived on the scene of a shooting that resulted in a homicide. Roughly 20 feet from the yellow caution tape cordoning off the crime scene, Cespedes observed a young girl skipping rope. His first thought was, “What kind of parent would allow a kid to jump rope so close to a crime scene?” And, then the realization hit him: this was normal.

⁷² From Mayor Villaraigosa’s Gang Reduction website, “Summer Night Lights is an anti-gang initiative that keeps parks open after dark—during the peak hours for gang activity—with free food and expanded programming. By empowering communities and targeting the traditionally most-violent summer months, Summer Night Lights has become a national model for violence reduction,” (<http://mayor.lacity.org/issues/gangreduction/summernightlights/index.htm>).

⁷³ “The UCR Program collects statistics on the number of offenses known to law enforcement. In the traditional Summary Reporting System (SRS), there are eight crimes, or Part I offenses, (murder and non-negligent homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and arson) to be reported to the UCR Program,” U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports (<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/ucrdata/offenses.cfm>) and “GRYD Program Milestones” information sheet.

Conclusion

Homicide, and particularly gun homicide, continues to be one of the most pressing public health concerns in California among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24.

Effective violence prevention strategies must include measures that prioritize preventing youth and young adults from accessing firearms, especially handguns. With firearms accounting for 83 percent of homicides in the 10 to 24 age range in California and handguns accounting for 73 percent of all gun homicides, the importance of prevention strategies to limit exposure to firearms in this age range are of the utmost importance. Important components of such a strategy would be the identification of the make, model, and caliber of weapons most preferred by this age group as well as analyses identifying the sources of the weapons. It should be kept in mind that a large percentage of this age group—those under the age of 21—cannot legally purchase a handgun. It is also generally illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to possess a handgun.⁷⁴ While most youth and young adults can neither buy nor possess a handgun, this in no way protects them from the emotional and psychological effects of gun violence. An ongoing need exists for the expansion of comprehensive violence intervention and prevention strategies that include a focus on the psychological well-being of witnesses and survivors of gun violence.

This year's county-by-county rankings also point to the continuing urgent need for tailored, localized approaches to reducing youth homicide that integrate prevention and intervention while engaging local leaders and community stakeholders. At the same time, state and regional policies should incorporate elements necessary to help ensure effective community practices.

Youth violence and its attendant high rates of homicide as well as gang warfare devastate many neighborhoods, destroying countless lives. The impact of this violence ripples across communities, ravaging local economies, home values, and depressing business centers. The violence forces people inside, limiting recreation and neighbor-to-neighbor interaction, holding residents captive. It is consuming and seemingly relentless. What is also clear is that these communities and the residents who reside in them are suffering deeply. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates that numerous programs—many on shoestring budgets—are capable of turning lives around and healing communities using holistic approaches. What might these communities look like if a substantial percentage of corrections funds were diverted to support street outreach and mental health services? The current “tough on crime” mentality that, despite the wealth of research, continues to exercise control over too many policymakers is not only economically unsustainable it is also morally suspect. It is time to allow programs such as the examples detailed in this report a real opportunity to improve neighborhoods and change lives through a significant shift in resources, and in the way we think about violence.

⁷⁴ Federal law prohibits Federal Firearms License holders from selling handguns to anyone under the age of 21. California law prohibits the sale of handguns by any person or corporation to anyone under the age of 21. Federal and California law prohibit the possession of handguns by anyone under the age of 18 with exceptions including hunting and competitive shooting. For exceptions see Ca. Penal Code 12101 Sections (a)(1), (a)(2). (Legal Community Against Violence, California State Law Summary, <http://www.lcav.org/states/Californiadetailedsummary.pdf#page=7>).

**Appendix One: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in
the United States by State, Ranked by Rate, 2010**

| State Ranking by Rate | State | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Louisiana | 172 | 17.70 |
| 2 | Missouri | 145 | 11.75 |
| 3 | Delaware | 21 | 11.39 |
| 4 | Illinois | 294 | 10.97 |
| 5 | Maryland | 129 | 10.94 |
| 6 | New Mexico | 45 | 10.37 |
| 7 | Alabama | 100 | 10.02 |
| 8 | Mississippi | 61 | 9.48 |
| 9 | Pennsylvania | 239 | 9.30 |
| 10 | Florida | 333 | 9.28 |
| 11 | Michigan | 185 | 8.88 |
| 12 | Georgia | 179 | 8.61 |
| 13 | Oklahoma | 67 | 8.51 |
| 14 | California | 690 | 8.43 |
| 15 | South Carolina | 75 | 7.82 |
| 16 | Tennessee | 100 | 7.80 |
| 17 | Arizona | 103 | 7.61 |
| 18 | Nevada | 41 | 7.55 |
| 19 | New York | 298 | 7.47 |
| 20 | New Jersey | 128 | 7.41 |
| 21 | North Carolina | 140 | 7.17 |
| 22 | Virginia | 113 | 6.91 |
| 23 | Massachusetts | 88 | 6.55 |
| 24 | Ohio | 154 | 6.52 |
| 25 | Texas | 362 | 6.49 |
| 26 | Connecticut | 46 | 6.40 |
| 27 | Alaska | 10 | 6.35 |

**Appendix One: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in
the United States by State, Ranked by Rate, 2010**

| State Ranking by Rate | State | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 28 | Indiana | 87 | 6.31 |
| 29 | Nebraska | 20 | 5.25 |
| 30 | Arkansas | 31 | 5.16 |
| 31 | Colorado | 43 | 4.21 |
| 32 | Wisconsin | 47 | 4.05 |
| 33 | Kentucky | 35 | 4.02 |
| 34 | Washington | 53 | 3.89 |
| 35 | Kansas | 23 | 3.79 |
| 36 | West Virginia | 12 | 3.46 |
| 37 | Minnesota | 33 | 3.07 |
| 38 | Iowa | 14 | 2.22 |
| 39 | Oregon | 16 | 2.13 |
| | Hawaii | fewer than 10 deaths ⁷⁵ | NA |
| | Idaho | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Maine | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Montana | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | New Hampshire | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | North Dakota | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Rhode Island | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | South Dakota | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Utah | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Vermont | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | Wyoming | fewer than 10 deaths | NA |
| | U.S. Total | 4,781 | 7.45 |

⁷⁵ Beginning with 2008 data, the National Center for Health Statistics has begun suppressing data if fewer than 10 deaths are reported in a given state. Death counts and rates are not included for those states. They are, however, included in the U.S. total for deaths and rate.

Appendix Two: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California by County, Ranked by Rate, 2011

| County Ranking by Rate | County | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | San Joaquin ⁷⁶ | 35 | 21.29 |
| 2 | San Francisco | 21 | 18.04 |
| 3 | Monterey | 16 | 16.96 |
| 4 | Alameda | 50 | 16.82 |
| 5 | Contra Costa | 31 | 14.74 |
| 6 | Solano | 12 | 13.71 |
| 7 | Tulare | 15 | 13.43 |
| 8 | Stanislaus | 12 | 9.92 |
| 9 | Los Angeles | 207 | 9.55 |
| 10 | Santa Cruz | 6 | 9.40 |
| 11 | Fresno | 20 | 8.64 |
| 12 | Sacramento | 26 | 8.48 |
| 13 | Kings | 3 | 8.42 |
| 14 | San Bernadino | 39 | 7.65 |
| 15 | San Mateo | 9 | 7.26 |
| 16 | Merced | 4 | 5.93 |
| 17 | Kern | 12 | 5.79 |
| 18 | Santa Clara | 19 | 5.54 |
| 19 | Imperial | 2 | 4.65 |
| 20 | Riverside | 24 | 4.55 |
| 21 | Sonoma | 4 | 4.24 |

⁷⁶ To help ensure more stable rates, only counties with a population of at least 25,000 youth and young adults between the ages of 10 to 24 are included. The selected counties account for 98 percent of homicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California (631 out of 641 victims) and 98 percent of California's population ages 10 to 24 (8,014,360 out of 8,188,043) for 2011.

Appendix Two: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California by County, Ranked by Rate, 2011

| County Ranking by Rate | County | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 22 | Orange | 25 | 3.82 |
| 23 | San Diego | 25 | 3.61 |
| 24 | Butte | 2 | 3.60 |
| 25 | Yolo | 2 | 3.19 |
| 26 | Ventura | 5 | 2.77 |
| 27 | Santa Barbara | 3 | 2.67 |
| 28 | Marin | 1 | 2.63 |
| 29 | San Luis Obispo | 1 | 1.50 |
| 30 (tie) | El Dorado | 0 | 0.00 |
| 30 (tie) | Humboldt | 0 | 0.00 |
| 30 (tie) | Madera | 0 | 0.00 |
| 30 (tie) | Napa | 0 | 0.00 |
| 30 (tie) | Placer | 0 | 0.00 |
| 30 (tie) | Shasta | 0 | 0.00 |
| | California Total | 631 | 7.87 |

Appendix Three: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California and Rates, Alphabetically by County, 2011

| County | County Ranking by Rate | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alameda ⁷⁷ | 4 | 50 | 16.82 |
| Butte | 24 | 2 | 3.60 |
| Contra Costa | 5 | 31 | 14.74 |
| El Dorado | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Fresno | 11 | 20 | 8.64 |
| Humboldt | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Imperial | 19 | 2 | 4.65 |
| Kern | 17 | 12 | 5.79 |
| Kings | 13 | 3 | 8.42 |
| Los Angeles | 9 | 207 | 9.55 |
| Madera | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Marin | 28 | 1 | 2.63 |
| Merced | 16 | 4 | 5.93 |
| Monterey | 3 | 16 | 16.96 |
| Napa | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Orange | 22 | 25 | 3.82 |
| Placer | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Riverside | 20 | 24 | 4.55 |
| Sacramento | 12 | 26 | 8.48 |
| San Bernardino | 14 | 39 | 7.65 |
| San Diego | 23 | 25 | 3.61 |
| San Francisco | 2 | 21 | 18.04 |

⁷⁷ To help ensure more stable rates, only counties with a population of at least 25,000 youth and young adults between the ages of 10 to 24 are included. The selected counties account for 98 percent of homicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California (631 out of 641 victims) and 98 percent of California's population ages 10 to 24 (8,014,360 out of 8,188,043) for 2011.

Appendix Three: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California and Rates, Alphabetically by County, 2011

| County | County Ranking by Rate | Number of Homicide Victims | Homicide Rate per 100,000 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| San Joaquin | 1 | 35 | 21.29 |
| San Luis Obispo | 29 | 1 | 1.50 |
| San Mateo | 15 | 9 | 7.26 |
| Santa Barbara | 27 | 3 | 2.67 |
| Santa Clara | 18 | 19 | 5.54 |
| Santa Cruz | 10 | 6 | 9.40 |
| Shasta | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0.00 |
| Solano | 6 | 12 | 13.71 |
| Sonoma | 21 | 4 | 4.24 |
| Stanislaus | 8 | 12 | 9.92 |
| Tulare | 7 | 15 | 13.43 |
| Ventura | 26 | 5 | 2.77 |
| Yolo | 25 | 2 | 3.19 |
| California Total | | 631 | 7.87 |

Appendix Four: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California and Rates, Alphabetically by County, 2009 through 2011

| County | County Ranking by Rate | | | Number of Homicide Victims | | | Homicide Rate per 100,000 | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------|------|------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| Alameda | 2 | 2 | 4 | 56 | 55 | 50 | 20.69 | 18.41 | 16.82 |
| Butte | 34 | 28 | 24 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1.61 | 1.87 | 3.60 |
| Contra Costa | 4 | 6 | 5 | 40 | 27 | 31 | 19.17 | 12.94 | 14.74 |
| El Dorado | 29 | 31 (tie) | 30 (tie) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2.83 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fresno | 12 | 7 | 11 | 25 | 27 | 20 | 11.54 | 11.61 | 8.64 |
| Humboldt | 19 | 31 (tie) | 30 (tie) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6.23 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Imperial | 31 | 26 | 19 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2.56 | 2.33 | 4.65 |
| Kern | 3 | 11 | 17 | 39 | 23 | 12 | 19.98 | 11.12 | 5.79 |
| Kings | 14 | 25 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 11.06 | 2.79 | 8.42 |
| Los Angeles | 6 | 10 | 9 | 303 | 248 | 207 | 14.61 | 11.35 | 9.55 |
| Madera | 20 | 9 | 30 (tie) | 2 | 4 | 0 | 6.01 | 11.39 | 0.00 |
| Marin | 32 | 20 | 28 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2.50 | 5.35 | 2.63 |
| Merced | 9 | 5 | 16 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 12.87 | 13.44 | 5.93 |
| Monterey | 1 | 1 | 3 | 28 | 23 | 16 | 31.24 | 24.36 | 16.96 |
| Napa | 35 | 31 (tie) | 30 (tie) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Orange | 26 | 23 | 22 | 25 | 22 | 25 | 4.10 | 3.37 | 3.82 |
| Placer | 24 | 31 (tie) | 30 (tie) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4.48 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Riverside | 21 | 18 (tie) | 20 | 28 | 30 | 24 | 5.71 | 5.75 | 4.55 |
| Sacramento | 13 | 13 | 12 | 33 | 30 | 26 | 11.39 | 9.75 | 8.48 |
| San Bernardino | 16 | 16 | 14 | 42 | 34 | 39 | 8.29 | 6.67 | 7.65 |
| San Diego | 27 | 22 | 23 | 26 | 26 | 25 | 4.03 | 3.73 | 3.61 |
| San Francisco | 11 | 8 | 2 | 12 | 14 | 21 | 11.84 | 11.52 | 18.04 |
| San Joaquin | 7 | 3 | 1 | 22 | 30 | 35 | 13.86 | 18.36 | 21.29 |
| San Luis Obispo | 22 | 24 | 29 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5.62 | 3.16 | 1.50 |

**Appendix Four: Youth and Young Adult Homicide Victims Ages 10 to 24 in California
and Rates, Alphabetically by County, 2009 through 2011**

| County | County Ranking by Rate | | | Number of Homicide Victims | | | Homicide Rate per 100,000 | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| San Mateo | 17 | 15 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7.39 | 7.26 | 7.26 |
| Santa Barbara | 25 | 30 | 27 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4.46 | 0.93 | 2.67 |
| Santa Clara | 23 | 27 | 18 | 18 | 7 | 19 | 5.49 | 2.05 | 5.54 |
| Santa Cruz | 15 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9.45 | 9.73 | 9.40 |
| Shasta | 30 | 18 (tie) | 30 (tie) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2.72 | 5.75 | 0.00 |
| Solano | 10 | 12 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 12 | 12.59 | 10.24 | 13.71 |
| Sonoma | 33 | 31 (tie) | 21 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2.20 | 0.00 | 4.24 |
| Stanislaus | 8 | 17 | 8 | 16 | 7 | 12 | 13.49 | 5.78 | 9.92 |
| Tulare | 5 | 4 | 7 | 16 | 20 | 15 | 15.31 | 18.06 | 13.43 |
| Ventura | 18 | 21 | 26 | 11 | 9 | 5 | 6.38 | 4.96 | 2.77 |
| Yolo | 28 | 29 | 25 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3.13 | 1.69 | 3.19 |
| California Total | | | | 803 | 680 | 631 | 10.48 | 8.48 | 7.87 |

**Appendix Five:
Additional Information for the 10 Counties with the
Highest Rates of Youth and Young Adult
Homicide Victimization**

California

631 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in California in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in California was 7.87 per 100,000 in 2011⁷⁸

Gender

Out of 631 homicide victims, 577 were male (91 percent), and 54 were female (9 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 629 homicide victims, 343 were Hispanic (55 percent), 201 were black (32 percent), 51 were white (8 percent), 32 were Asian (5 percent), and 2 were “other” (less than 1 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 83 percent of victims (520 out of 625) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 73 percent (382 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 70 victims (11 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments, 11 victims (2 percent) killed by a blunt object, and 8 victims (1 percent) killed by bodily force.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 31 percent of victims (97 out of 316) were murdered by someone they knew. One hundred seventy-two victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 15 percent (47 out of 316) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 81 percent (362 out of 445) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 61 percent (222 homicides) were gang-related. Twenty-two percent (80 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Eleven percent (40 homicides) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 55 percent (344 out of 620) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Twelve percent (75 out of 620) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Thirteen percent (82 out of 620) occurred at another residence, and 6 percent (40 out of 620) occurred in a vehicle.

⁷⁸ To help ensure more stable rates, only counties with a population of at least 25,000 youth and young adults between the ages of 10 to 24 are included. The selected counties account for 98 percent of homicide victims ages 10 to 24 in California (631 out of 641 victims) and 98 percent of California’s population ages 10 to 24 (8,014,360 out of 8,188,043) for 2011.

San Joaquin County

35 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in San Joaquin County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in San Joaquin County was 21.29 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 1st in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 35 homicide victims, 32 were male (91 percent), and 3 were female (9 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 35 homicide victims, 18 were Hispanic (51 percent), 9 were black (26 percent), 2 were white (6 percent), and 6 were Asian (17 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 94 percent of victims (33 out of 35) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 85 percent (28 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 victim (3 percent) killed with a knife or other cutting instrument.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 35 percent of victims (6 out of 17) were murdered by someone they knew. Ten victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 6 percent (1 out of 17) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 67 percent (14 out of 21) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 29 percent (4 homicides) were gang-related. Twenty-one percent (3 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Fifty percent (7 homicides) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 46 percent (16 out of 35) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Six percent (2 out of 35) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Twenty percent (7 out of 35) occurred at another residence, and 14 percent (5 out of 35) occurred in a vehicle.

San Francisco County

21 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in San Francisco County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in San Francisco County was 18.04 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 2nd in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 21 homicide victims, 21 were male (100 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 21 homicide victims, 4 were Hispanic (19 percent), 13 were black (62 percent), 1 was white (5 percent), and 3 were Asian (14 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 90 percent of victims (19 out of 21) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 95 percent (18 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 victim (5 percent) killed with a knife or other cutting instrument.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 50 percent of victims (6 out of 12) were murdered by someone they knew. Two victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 33 percent (4 out of 12) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 80 percent (8 out of 10) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 50 percent (4 homicides) were gang-related. Thirty-eight percent (3 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Thirteen percent (1 homicide) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 76 percent (16 out of 21) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Ten percent (2 out of 21) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Five percent (1 out of 21) occurred in a vehicle.

Monterey County

16 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Monterey County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Monterey County was 16.96 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 3rd in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 16 homicide victims, 14 were male (88 percent), and 2 were female (13 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 16 homicide victims, 14 were Hispanic (88 percent) and 2 were white (13 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 93 percent of victims (14 out of 15) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 43 percent (6 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 victim (7 percent) killed with a knife or other cutting instrument.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 40 percent of victims (2 out of 5) were murdered by someone they knew. Two victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 20 percent (1 out of 5) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 92 percent (11 out of 12) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 82 percent (9 homicides) were gang-related. Nine percent (1 homicide) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 33 percent (5 out of 15) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Seven percent (1 out of 15) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Thirty-three percent (5 out of 15) occurred at another residence, and 7 percent (1 out of 15) occurred in a vehicle.

Alameda County

50 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Alameda County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Alameda County was 16.82 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 4th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 50 homicide victims, 46 were male (92 percent), and 4 were female (8 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 50 homicide victims, 2 were Hispanic (4 percent), 39 were black (78 percent), 8 were white (16 percent), and 1 was Asian (2 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 96 percent of victims (48 out of 50) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 42 percent (20 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 victim (2 percent) killed with a knife or other cutting instrument, and 1 victim (2 percent) killed with a blunt object.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 10 percent of victims (1 out of 10) were murdered by someone they knew. Eight victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 10 percent (1 out of 10) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 46 percent (6 out of 13) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 50 percent (3 homicides) were gang-related. Fifty percent (3 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 75 percent (36 out of 48) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Four percent (2 out of 48) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Six percent (3 out of 48) occurred at another residence.

Contra Costa County

31 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Contra Costa County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Contra Costa County was 14.74 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 5th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 31 homicide victims, 30 were male (97 percent), and 1 was female (3 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 31 homicide victims, 8 were Hispanic (26 percent), 18 were black (58 percent), and 5 were white (16 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 94 percent of victims (29 out of 31) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 69 percent (20 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 2 victims (6 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 44 percent of victims (4 out of 9) were murdered by someone they knew. Four were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 11 percent (1 out of 9) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 88 percent (15 out of 17) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 13 percent (2 homicides) were gang-related. Thirty-three percent (5 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Forty-seven percent (7 homicides) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 47 percent (14 out of 30) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Twenty percent (6 out of 30) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Ten percent (3 out of 30) occurred at another residence. Thirteen percent (4 homicides) occurred in a vehicle.

Solano County

12 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Solano County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Solano County was 13.71 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 6th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 12 homicide victims, 12 were male (100 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 12 homicide victims, 5 were Hispanic (42 percent), and 7 were black (58 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 92 percent of victims (11 out of 12) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 91 percent (10 victims) were killed with handguns. There was 1 victim (8 percent) killed with a knife or other cutting instrument.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 60 percent of victims (3 out of 5) were murdered by someone they knew. One victim was killed by a stranger. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 20 percent (1 out of 5) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 60 percent (3 out of 5) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Sixty-seven percent (2 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Thirty-three percent (1 homicide) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 36 percent (4 out of 11) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Nine percent (1 out of 11) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Eighteen percent (2 out of 11) occurred at another residence, and 27 percent (3 out of 11) occurred in a vehicle.

Tulare County

15 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Tulare County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Tulare County was 13.43 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 7th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 15 homicide victims, 15 were male (100 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 15 homicide victims, 14 were Hispanic (93 percent), and 1 was black (7 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 73 percent of victims (11 out of 15) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 73 percent (8 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 3 victims (20 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 10 percent of victims (1 out of 10) were murdered by someone they knew. Four victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 50 percent (5 out of 10) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 92 percent (12 out of 13) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 75 percent (9 homicides) were gang-related. Seventeen percent (2 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Eight percent (1 homicide) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 67 percent (10 out of 15) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Thirteen percent (2 out of 15) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Seven percent (1 out of 15) occurred at another residence.

Stanislaus County

12 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Stanislaus County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Stanislaus County was 9.92 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 8th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 12 homicide victims, 11 were male (92 percent), and 1 was female (8 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 12 homicide victims, 9 were Hispanic (75 percent), 1 was black (8 percent), and 2 were white (17 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 67 percent of victims (8 out of 12) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 50 percent (4 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 4 victims (33 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, no victims were murdered by someone they knew. Five victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 38 percent (3 out of 8) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 100 percent (10 out of 10) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 40 percent (4 homicides) were gang-related. Fifty percent (5 homicides) involved an argument between the victim and the offender. Ten percent (1 homicide) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 25 percent (3 out of 12) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Thirty-three percent (4 out of 12) occurred at another residence, and 17 percent (2 out of 12) occurred in a vehicle.

Los Angeles County

207 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Los Angeles County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Los Angeles County was 9.55 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 9th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 207 homicide victims, 191 were male (92 percent), and 16 were female (8 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 206 homicide victims, 135 were Hispanic (66 percent), 63 were black (31 percent), 5 were white (2 percent), 2 were Asian (1 percent), and 1 was “other” (less than 1 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 87 percent of victims (178 out of 205) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 88 percent (157 victims) were killed with handguns. There were 18 victims (9 percent) killed with knives or other cutting instruments, and 4 victims (2 percent) killed by a blunt object.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 12 percent of victims (11 out of 92) were murdered by someone they knew. Seventy-one victims were killed by strangers. For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, 11 percent (10 out of 92) were gang members.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 86 percent (142 out of 166) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 75 percent (107 homicides) were gang-related. Thirteen percent (19 homicides) involved arguments between the victim and the offender. Eight percent (12 homicides) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 64 percent (130 out of 202) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot. Ten percent (20 out of 202) occurred in the home of the victim or offender. Ten percent (21 out of 202) occurred at another residence, and 6 percent (13 out of 202) occurred in a vehicle.

Santa Cruz County

6 youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 were murdered in Santa Cruz County in 2011

The homicide rate among youth and young adults ages 10 to 24 in Santa Cruz County was 9.40 per 100,000 in 2011

Ranked 10th in California among counties with a population of 10- to 24-year olds 25,000 or greater

Gender

Out of 6 homicide victims, 6 were male (100 percent).

Race/Ethnicity

Out of 6 homicide victims, 6 were Hispanic (100 percent).

Most Common Weapons

For homicides in which the weapon used could be identified, 100 percent of victims (6 out of 6) were shot and killed with guns. Of these, 67 percent (4 victims) were killed with handguns.

Victim to Offender Relationship

For homicides in which the victim to offender relationship could be identified, no victims were murdered by someone they knew. Two victims were killed by strangers.

Circumstance

For homicides in which the circumstances could be identified, 83 percent (5 out of 6) were not related to the commission of any other felony. Of these, 80 percent (4 homicides) were gang-related. Twenty percent (1 homicide) were drive-by shootings.

Location

For homicides in which the location could be determined, 67 percent (4 out of 6) occurred on a street, sidewalk, or in a parking lot.



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