Introduction

As first responders, law enforcement officers make critical choices that affect youth every day, including young victims, at-risk youth and juvenile offenders. Violent acts, bullying, drugs, sexual assault, Internet crime, running away, family abuse, mental/emotional disorders, and suicides are often, in frequent combination, part of the life of youth in America. Protecting youth and children from victimization, in their homes, in schools, on the Internet, and on the street is a fundamental obligation of police agencies. Thoughtful and evidence-based decisions made by police officers during youth encounters, whether it be with a youth victim, suspect, or witness, can, in many instances, have far-reaching benefits or unintended consequences for a young person, the community, and, ultimately, public safety. Police are often the first contact youth have with the justice system. These contacts can unintentionally be a gateway for a youth's entry into the juvenile justice system and possibly a future of adult criminal activities. Alternatively, police contact with youth can be opportunities to intervene positively in the lives and futures of young persons while ensuring public safety. It is critical that law enforcement officers recognize the opportunities for positive interaction with youth and be sufficiently trained to take advantage these key decision points. "Law enforcement officers are in a position to positively influence youth and to ensure youth/law enforcement interactions go smoothly and produce a desirable outcome. Building healthy relationships with youth and creating a positive adult influence during interactions can foster healthy youth development. A law enforcement officer can serve as a strong protective factor to a young person."[1]

It is important to differentiate between low and high-risk delinquency and crime. Status offenses, infractions that would not be considered criminal if the youth were an adult (e.g. truancy, underage drinking, running away, curfew violation), are typically low-risk. The research is clear, youth processed through the justice system for status offenses are more likely to re-enter the juvenile or criminal justice systems in the future[2] and they may also be at greater risk for negative educational and mental health life outcomes. Furthermore, "…entering the formal court system can have many damaging effects on a child and family that may cause them more harm and/or amplify the issues that brought them into the system… for low-level delinquency offenders, diversion programs have a more positive effect than formal court involvement and are more cost-

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[1] International Association of Chiefs of Police, *The Effects of Adolescent Development on Policing, (2015),* Alexandria, VA, http://www.theiacp.org/teenbrain (Accessed February 23, 2015).
[2] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Diversion Literature Review*, by A. Boutilier and Marcia Cohen, (2009), Washington, DC.

effective.[3]" As adolescents age, their risk of committing a crime or delinquent act lessens. Even high risk adolescent behavior is not necessarily indicative of future adult behavior. The prevalence of offending peaks in the teenage years (15-19) and then declines in the early 20's.[4]

Appropriate interventions for serious youth offenders are just as important as appropriate interventions for status and low-risk offenders. Both research and experience demonstrates that just a small percentage of youth offenders go on to re-offend and become serious and/or habitual offenders. These youth may benefit from corrective guidance to alter their life paths, helping to direct them out of a life of crime, delinquency, and victimization. Collaboration between law enforcement agencies and allied criminal/juvenile justice partners is the basis of cooperative case management processes that enable the juvenile justice system to focus informed attention on youth who repeatedly commit serious crimes. This would require multiple agency and stakeholder buy-in and information sharing to:

- "Provide relevant and complete case information for more informed charging, investigative, and sentencing decisions;
- Avoid duplication of and filling gaps in services;
- Plan for and support reintegration into family and/or community (where there is removal); and
- Prevent juvenile recidivism and graduation to the adult criminal justice system."[5]

Early, positive engagement by law enforcement can have significant impact on the growth and development of youth. Police can find opportunities to impact youth through programs such as youth citizen academies and Police Athletic Leagues (PAL) or officers can directly provide guidance and mentoring by engaging with youth in the neighborhoods they serve.

"Other keys to positive youth engagement include the following:

- Understand ways to reach youth effectively. For example, use of social media to engage this unique group is imperative.
- Educate department staff on differences in youth thinking and behavior, including how to de-escalate a situation in which youths are involved.
- Model respectful relationships for youth to foster officer and community safety."[6]

IACP has developed a Youth Focused Policing (YFP) strategy to enable police to proactively intervene with youth to reduce crime, delinquency, victimization, long-term health and criminal justice costs and prolonged involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Deploying

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[3] Coalition of Juvenile Justice, *National Standards for the Care of Youth Charged with Status Offenses*, (2013), http://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/National%20Standards%20for%20the%20Care%20of%20Youth%20Charged%20with%20Status%20Offenses%20FINAL_0.pdf (Accessed February 11, 2015).

[4] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Criminal Career Patterns*, (2014), https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/242545.pdf (Accessed October 2, 2014).

[5] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and The International Association of Chiefs of Police, *Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program Facilitator Guide*, (2008), p. 7, Washington, DC, http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/SHOCAP_FacilitatorGuide.pdf (Accessed February 23, 2015).

[6] International Association of Chiefs of Police, *IACP National Policy Summit on Community-Police Relations: Advancing a Culture of Cohesion and Community Trust,* (2015), p. 5, Alexandria, VA, http://www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/documents/pdfs/Community Police RelationsSummitReport_web.pdf (Accessed February 23, 2015).

evidence-based interventions with youth is expected to produce benefits to communities including reductions in the need for short-term youth services and costs of health and longer term correctional and family support. While youth-oriented resource needs are increasing, there is still serious underinvestment. These conditions impair law enforcement's ability to identify, assess, understand, and respond effectively and comprehensively to youth.

A key in defining the police role in a Youth Focused Policing program is understanding how law enforcement activities (e.g. patrol, investigative and prevention) can either reduce youth crime, victimization and delinquency risk factors or increase protective factors that are shown to be effective. Every law enforcement agency can benefit from a closer look at its practices and policies for responding to crime, delinquency, and victimization involving youth. This Self-Assessment Tool, a component of IACP's *Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Youth Training and Technical Assistance Program*, seeks to assist law enforcement agencies assessing their current state of policy and practice in prevention and response strategies to reduce juvenile offending, reoffending and victimization. Upon completion, agencies may discover opportunities to implement new strategies and/or identify areas that can be fine-tuned and polished.

User Guide

The goal of this Agency Self-Assessment is to provide a tool that, once completed, can serve as the foundation of an Action Plan that the agency develops to enhance its capacity to respond to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization.

This Self-Assessment Tool is not intended to be a critique of any agency, policy or program. However, the value of this assessment to agencies is largely dependent upon how honest agency professionals are with answering these questions.

WHY COMPLETE THIS AGENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

Law enforcement agencies play a substantial role in reducing and preventing crime and delinquency committed by and upon youth. Law enforcement agencies are frequently expected, if not required, to develop comprehensive plans to accomplish this objective. Early identification of trends, resources needed to assist youth, and community partnerships are helpful in identifying best practice responses to improving the safety and well-being of youth. This Self-Assessment Tool is designed to assist law enforcement agencies in evaluating current agency strengths as well as areas for improvement in responding to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization. It is intended to stimulate discussion about opportunities for improvement and strategies to develop a Youth Focused Policing model within your agency.

WHO SHOULD COMPLETE THIS AGENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

Law enforcement agencies interested in enhancing their capacity to respond effectively to youth or those agencies that are considering the development of a Youth Focused Policing strategy should complete this Self-Assessment Tool.

HOW SHOULD MY AGENCY COMPLETE THIS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

Agency executives interested in completing this Self-Assessment Tool should identify a team of personnel to respond to the questions. Because of the variety of information, no single person or unit will likely be able to answer all of the questions. Additionally, representatives from multiple patrol functions and specialized assignments will likely provide a broader department-wide perspective on current activity. Answer the following statements according to how things CURRENTLY OPERATE in your department rather than how you would prefer them to be or how you think they should be.

The assessment consists of 118 items, divided into 13 sub-categories. Each sub-category begins with a short description of the importance of the category, followed by a series of questions. All questions are close-ended, soliciting yes or no answers. A discussion of each sub-category follows the questions.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE MY AGENCY COMPLETES THIS ASSESSMENT TOOL?

This assessment does not contain a scoring system to tally individual responses because of the variation in law enforcement agency composition, as well as state and local laws. Instead, responses in each sub-category should be viewed as indicators of performance. Overall responses should be examined from a comparative perspective (the number of "yes" responses indicating

that a particular practice is being performed compared to the number of "no" responses, indicating that it is not) by sub-category and for the entire assessment.

Additionally, the order of the sub-categories is not intended to create any hierarchy or priority. The discussion section of each sub-category addresses certain priorities for agencies to consider in developing or enhancing their Youth Focused Policing strategy.

You will note that several questions have a long list of choices. These were created purposefully. No agency is expected to be able to check every option.

The completed Agency Self-Assessment Tool can serve as the foundation for an Action Plan your agency develops to enhance its capacity to respond to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization.

Implementation Resources

The apparent lack of resources needed to implement all or part of the strategies suggested in this Agency Self-Assessment Tool should not be considered barriers to the process. Some of the activities described in this Self-Assessment Tool will likely require additional funding, manpower, or other resources. However, these resources may be available through partnerships and collaborations with non-governmental philanthropic, civic, or non-profit organizations. It is important to acknowledge that some of the ideas don't cost anything but a desire to do things differently.

1. Mission, Vision, Values Statements

A top-tier, agency-wide mission/vision/values statement or defined goals and objectives directed specifically at youth welfare or youth crime, delinquency, and/or victimization is essential to establishing an organizational culture that places a priority on youth.

	Yes	No
Does your agency have a mission/vision/values statement or strategic plan that places emphasis/priority on protecting youth?		
If yes, are they supported with established goals and objectives?		
Does your agency conduct periodic (annual at least) assessments of progress toward stated goals?		

An agency-wide mission, vision, or values statement, or strategic plan supported by clearly defined goals and objectives that emphasize the protection of youth from victimization or involvement in criminal and/or delinquent activity is the first step in creating a Youth Focused Policing strategy. It also helps to establish executive level support.

Periodic assessments, conducted at regular intervals, of the progress made toward individual goals or objectives help to determine the effectiveness of individual programs, identify strengths and weaknesses in existing efforts, and identify gaps in the delivery of programs, services or resources that will help to accomplish them.

A "yes" response to questions one or two indicates positive first steps in establishing a Youth Focused Policing strategy.

A "no" answer to any of the questions in this section identifies additional actions that should be considered.

Sample Mission Statement

The North Miami Police Department is committed to providing professional, efficient, and courteous public service by creating a safer environment, while improving the quality of life for those we serve. Educating the public, mentoring the youth, and involving the stakeholders of the community are the foundation of our crime prevention philosophy. Respect, courtesy and integrity are the essential ingredients to enhancing our community partnerships.[7]

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[7] "North Miami Police Department Mission Statement," City of North Miami, http://www.northmiamipolice.com/about_nmpd/ (Accessed March 18, 2015).

2. Policies & Procedures

Youth specific policies are necessary to guide the actions of all members of the organization to reduce youth crime, delinquency, and victimization. The responsibilities of all agency personnel involved in the investigation, prevention and intervention of these should be clearly defined.

Does your agency have policies and/or procedures to:	Yes	No
respond to youth specific crime/delinquency		
support the prevention of criminal/delinquent activity by or upon youth		
collaborate with other government agencies to intervene with youth affected by crime/delinquency(victim or suspect)		
participate in or facilitate juvenile justice referral programs		
other (list)		
Do these policies/procedures apply:		
agency-wide		
only to specialized juvenile units		
other (list)		

Policies and procedures help to establish responsibilities for all agency personnel with respect to Youth Focused Policing activities. While certain policies and procedures must be directed at certain individual personnel or activities (such as interviews and interrogations) other policies and procedures should provide direction for all personnel (such as participation in a juvenile justice diversion program or youth mentoring project).

A "no" answer to any responses connected to the first question indicates a need to revise or establish policies and procedures related to youth focused activities.

If your agency applies youth focused policies/procedures to specialized units only, consider if it may be more effective to apply these policies agency-wide, strengthening your agency capacity for operational response strategies to reduce juvenile offending, reoffending and victimization.

3. Agency Organization

The structure of an organization is important to its overarching commitment to Youth Focused Policing. The existence of dedicated function(s) that support agency mission, goals and objectives reinforce agency commitment and provide immediate access to resources for first responders engaged in youth focused activities.

Does your agency have Divisions/Units/Personnel/Volunteers assigned to	Yes	No
Youth or Juvenile Units		
Physical/Sexual Child Abuse or Exploitation Investigations		
Police Athletic League		
School Resource Officers		
Gang Unit		
Public Housing		
Crime Prevention		
Community Services (or similar function)		
Other function not listed above. If yes, list below.		

While many police agencies do not have the manpower to staff all or some of the full time positions listed above, it may be possible to assign personnel to part time or ad hoc positions in order to provide additional resources to youth. Additionally, some agencies share responsibilities for certain functions such as the Police Athletic League (PAL) and Community Services with other governmental agencies. Likewise, other law enforcement agencies have partnered with non-profit or philanthropic agencies to provide funding, manpower, facilities and other resources not otherwise available. Volunteers can also serve as a force multiplier for many of the functions listed in this category, especially Community Services and Crime Prevention activities.

A "no" answer to any of the above questions suggests that agencies consider re-evaluating existing organizational structures to incorporate the above functions.

A "yes" answer to any of the questions may also suggest an opportunity to consider establishing new partnerships with other organizations that may be able to supplement existing resources.

4. Personnel Assigned to Juvenile Functions

The number of personnel assigned to youth related units, functions or activities should be sufficient to carry out its functions. The use of properly screened volunteers to supplement agency personnel responsible for this function can also serve as a force multiplier.

Number of Officers /Detectives with Responsibility for Youth	
Number of Supervisory Personnel	
Civilian Staff	
Volunteers	
Other (list)	

If all officers are responsible for, and trained in, responding to youth as part of their day to day duties, include the total number of officers. The number of personnel assigned and/or trained to respond to youth, full time or part time, defines not only an agency's commitment to youth focused efforts but also the actual services provided. One officer assigned as the agency's "youth officer" will not likely be able to provide all of the services and resources needed by youth, especially those identified as "at-risk."

Although there is no ready-made formula for determining the minimum number of officers needed for youth functions, police agencies can begin to identify manpower needs through an assessment of community needs and available resources.

Collaborative efforts with other government and non-government organizations can lead to a smaller, well-defined list of essential services to be provided by a police agency.

Responses to the questions in this section can serve as a gauge to determine the level of officer engagement in youth related functions. Ideally, every member of a police agency should have some role in those functions, if only to serve a source of referral information to the public.

5. Juvenile Information Collection

Juvenile specific data, as well as aggregated data, from a variety of public and/or government sources provide opportunities to identify trends or patterns adversely affecting youth and to develop corresponding resources.

Does your agency regularly collect information during contacts with juvenile victims or offenders relating to:	Offenders		Victims	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
name (first, middle, last)				
nickname				
gender				
race				
age/date of birth				
home address				
family members				
school attended				
highest grade completed				
parent(s)				
telephone number(s)				
email address(es)				
driver license number				
social media website participation – Facebook, Twitter, etc.				
hobbies, activities				
church(es) attended				
identifying scars, marks, tattoos				
gang affiliation				
other (list)				
Does your agency regularly receive information relating to juvenile activity from:				
- Juvenile Detention Facilities				
admissions				
releases				
visitors				
juvenile complaints regarding victimization by staff or other detainees				
disciplinary actions				
other (list)				
- Juvenile Probation agencies				
juvenile probation clients				
conditions of probation				
probation agent				

- Juvenile Justice Courts				
criminal history				
case summaries				
-Public Education Institutions				
suspensions				
expulsions				
truancy/attendance				
- Private Education Institutions				
suspensions				
expulsions				
truancy/attendance				
-Other(list)				
Does your agency regularly receive/obtain aggregated data for all citizens to include:				
- population trends				
under age 18				
under age 5				
- homelessness				
adult				
juvenile				
- income levels				
median income				
below poverty level				
- households				
single parent				
no parent living in home				
persons per household				
- public health trends				
hospital admissions				
communicable diseases				
fire/ems activity				
-Other(list)				

A properly designed and managed youth information database is invaluable to law enforcement agencies engaged in Youth Focused Policing activities. Crime and victimization trend analyses, community resource deployment, crime prevention program development, identification of training needs, as well as the potential to develop partnerships with resource providers are primary benefits of information collection. Secondary benefits include improved delivery of services for youth, reduced costs for programs and services through shared resources, and the development of alternative responses to crime and delinquent acts committed by youth.

Much of the information identified in the questions above can be collected through routine police activity. Other information not readily available to police agencies may be obtained through collaborative partnerships and memorandums of understanding that clearly define each agency's role and responsibilities in collecting, sharing, using and safeguarding it.

Individual state laws may prevent the release of certain information about youth, even to police agencies. Federal HIPPA laws also restrict the release of certain medical information to anyone other than a patient or parent in cases of minor children. Additionally, the collection of detailed information about youth may be a sensitive topic in many communities, especially information from public schools. Careful consideration should be given to the nature, use of, and security of this information prior to making any requests. Despite these restrictions and sensitivities, law enforcement agencies will greatly benefit from efforts to collect this information.

Responses to questions in this category should be evaluated within each sub-category. "No" responses identify potential sources of information that may be beneficial to your agency. Multiple "no" responses in an individual sub-category (or multiple categories) suggest that a higher level of attention be afforded to those areas.

6. Juvenile Crime Analysis

The ability of an agency to analyze and disseminate information about youth crime, delinquency, and victimization is essential to Youth Focused Policing activities. Agency personnel should have immediate access to up-to-date information, and need not be limited to law enforcement agency records.

Does your agency regularly perform analyses of criminal and delinquent activity regarding:	Yes	No
crime committed by youth		
youth victimization		
juvenile recidivism rates		
status offenses		
other(list)		

Ongoing analysis of youth crime, delinquency, and victimization is a critical function for any law enforcement agency engaged in Youth Focused Policing efforts. Aside from a mission statement and policies/procedures to support Youth Focused Policing efforts, it is the most significant step in developing a comprehensive strategy to prevent crime and delinquency committed by and upon youth. The ability to identify crime, delinquency, and victimization trends, hot spots, community needs for youth, and other youth related issues in a timely manner forms the basis to develop strategies, programs, or other responses. Without careful analysis, agency actions relating to youth may be fragmented, ignored, underestimated, or lack appropriate support.

For many agencies, this may be a challenging task due to missing or incomplete information needed for comprehensive analysis, disparate and/or stand-alone databases, and insufficient personnel to perform the work, or a combination of all of these issues. Subsequently, initial actions may be required simply to provide logistical support. However, the concept of collecting and analyzing this information can be the impetus to recruit support from non-traditional law enforcement partners who can aid in the effort. Volunteers, local colleges, non-profit organizations, retirees and other government agencies with responsibilities for delivering programs and services for youth are some examples of these partners.

A "no" answer to <u>any</u> of the above questions should be considered a high priority in developing a Youth Focused Policing strategy for your agency.

7. Access to Youth Focused Informational Databases

Access to information about youth by first line personnel and investigators can inform decision making, enhance problem solving, identify gaps in resources for youth and help them to recognize trends in youth related issues. All agency personnel with the proper authorization to access juvenile information should be able to do so 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Likewise, law enforcement agencies should consider the development and regular maintenance of a database of community resources available to youth, accessible to agency personnel 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Does your agency provide all sworn personnel with immediate access to:	Yes	No
youth related crime data - suspect and victim		
juvenile justice system records		
status offenses		
juvenile probation records		
community resources related to youth		
mentoring/counseling organizations		
school attendance records		
other education/training organization attendance records		
drug treatment organizations		
any database with youth specific information		
other (list)		

In order for agency personnel to make informed decisions about youth, a variety of information is needed. Although some of this information may be readily available from agency maintained databases, much of it must be accessed from other agencies or organizations outside the agency. Although limited information may be available to law enforcement officers via telephone, access to the majority of this information will likely require the creation of legal agreements and rules and regulations regarding access and dissemination. In certain jurisdictions, state law may prohibit the release of records regarding juvenile crime, delinquency, victimization, and justice system information, as well as school information. This restriction must be evaluated on a case by case basis. Ideally, an officer attempting to aid a parent during the overnight shift should have the same access to information as the officer working the day shift Monday through Friday.

A "no" answer to any of the above questions regarding access to youth informational databases suggests courses of action to enable all members of your agency to support youth focused efforts. Multiple negative responses indicate a greater need.

8. Juvenile Crime Information Sharing

Youth crime, delinquency, and victimization information sharing and exchange, especially with non-law enforcement agencies, can be helpful in raising awareness and responses to incidents affecting youth. The recruitment of additional resource providers is also an added benefit to information exchange.

Does your agency regularly share information relating to juvenile criminal and delinquent activity and/or victimization with:			Type of information	
	Yes	No	Specific	Aggregate
juvenile probation agencies				
education institutions (public and private)				
community service providers				
public health agencies				
other law enforcement agencies with concurrent jurisdiction				
federal task forces related to youth crime or victimization (human trafficking, etc.)				
social service agencies				
elected or public officials				
non-profit groups (churches, shelters, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.)				
other (list):				

In many jurisdictions, dissemination of specific information related to individual juveniles is restricted to those within the criminal justice system or otherwise permitted by law (social service agencies, physical and mental health treatment providers, etc.). However, in some cases, aggregated information may be shared, provided that the information is sanitized to protect the identity of all juveniles.

Information sharing with local non-law enforcement government agencies, community groups, non-profits, service providers, etc., can be invaluable in responding to the needs of youth. It can be particularly useful in providing resources to juveniles considered to be at-risk-- those exposed to violence or victims of crime. Even in an aggregated format, it can help to identify hot spots, trends, and areas that need additional attention.

Information sharing not only helps other agencies and organizations to provide resources for youth but it also encourages two-way communication with law enforcement agencies. For example, a summary report of the types of crime committed upon youth in certain communities could lead to the development of an educational program taught in local schools to help prevent future victimization.

A common example of this type of information sharing can be found on many police department websites where citizens can search for crime activity in a certain neighborhood, police precinct, or other geographic region; general crime information is provided without identifying individual

victims or addresses. This information is often used by prospective residents, community groups, or the media to assess safety issues.

The type of information provided, specific or detailed, relates to the amount of information provided about individual juveniles or the circumstances surrounding a specific incident. Again, dissemination of this information may be regulated by state or local law. However, law enforcement agencies should examine current information sharing practices to determine if more detailed information can or should be provided to other organizations and government agencies also engaged in providing assistance to youth.

A "no" answer to any of the questions in this section should be evaluated to determine if it is both legal and feasible to share that information. Additional considerations should be given to the frequency and manner of information distribution (electronic, in-person meeting, formal report, etc.).

9. Partnerships and Collaborations

Law enforcement agencies are continually challenged to respond to an ever increasing demand for services to protect youth, prevent victimization, and reduce recidivism among juveniles already involved with the juvenile justice system. Unfortunately, a lack of money, manpower, and resources often inhibit an agency's response to those demands. Therefore, law enforcement agencies must be prepared to provide referral information to youth, parents, family members, school officials or others that request assistance.

Does your agency provide information/referrals related to:	Yes	No
public transportation		
athletic activities		
mentoring services		
drug counseling services		
health services		
academic/education services		
employment training		
mental health services		
community/social events		
other (list):		
Is referral information immediately available to all personnel 24/7/365		
Does your agency provide a contact name and telephone number for the above agencies		

The development and regular maintenance of a referral list of service providers that work with law enforcement agencies to provide assistance to youth either in the absence of, or in addition to a law enforcement program, is essential to a comprehensive Youth Focused Policing program. For example, information about public transportation resources may be helpful in attracting juveniles into a program who live outside the immediate vicinity of the facility hosting it.

Since law enforcement officers are very often the first point of contact for youth, or parents of youth, impacted by a crime, delinquent act, or at-risk behavior, they are the most appropriate sources of referral information. At those moments, officers must be prepared to provide specific information about potential sources of assistance. This includes a contact name and telephone number of the agency providing the assistance. School Resource Officers are a critical first point of contact in many instances and should be primary recipients of this information.

Regular maintenance of the referral list will help to ensure that accurate information is provided to those who ask for it. While this task may appear time consuming, a well-structured volunteer program could make short work of it.

Additionally, the mere process of establishing a list may generate interest from other organizations interested in providing services. A word of caution however: all non-government organizations offering services to youth should be properly vetted for potential conflicts, performance history, and most important of all, youth safety.

The list of referrals provided above is not meant to be all-inclusive. Additional referrals should be added to the list as appropriate. Subsequently, the only recommendation for this section is for agencies to create and/or update a referral list that is easily accessible to all personnel, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. This task can be challenging to maintain given the number of agencies that contribute information to this topic. However, this task is ideally suited for volunteers, interns, and to some extent police explorers. The use of these groups of citizens can serve to be a force multiplier for law enforcement agencies that are manpower deficient.

10. Best Practices or Evidence Based Programs

The inclusion of peer reviewed or scientifically evaluated programs to reduce crime, delinquency, and/or victimization can often provide law enforcement with effective strategies without the need for additional funding, manpower or resources. Law enforcement agencies may consider implementing an existing best practice or evidence based program rather than inventing a solution that is not known to be effective. Evidence based programs often provide contact personnel who can assist agencies with implementation.

		Yes	No
Does your agency incorporate best practice or evidence based programs in developing operational or agency wide responses to youth problems			
If yes, list program names			
Does your agency conduct evaluations of programs used that are not currently evidence based			

Best practices or evidence based programs provide guidance to law enforcement agencies seeking to reduce specific crimes or behaviors. Through peer review, scientific testing, or academic evaluation, these programs have been determined to achieve specific outcomes for law enforcement agencies.

The incorporation of best practice and evidence based programs can enhance a law enforcement agency's potential to attract other partners, funding agencies, and/or resource providers to participate in the program. Properly designed evaluations may also serve as the foundation for expansion of a program, the acquisition of additional resources or manpower, awards, commendations or other recognition.

It is insufficient to evaluate a program based merely on whether or not crime, delinquency, or victimization did or did not increase within the jurisdiction during the time frame of the program. Other factors should be considered in order to provide reliable evidence of effectiveness. Therefore, it is important to gather information on different variables that may have impacted the results of the program, such as program design, characteristics of participating youth, and long-term behavioral effects.

Law enforcement can learn more about the evaluation process for youth programs using IACP's *Program Impact Toolkit,* which contains resources to identify youth-specific problems, articulate program goals and activities, and measure outcomes of youth programs. The *Toolkit* includes an overview of the evaluation process, a step-by-step guide with examples, as well as a blank template that agencies can use to start evaluating their programs.

Additionally, law enforcement agencies should consider partnering with local colleges and universities, especially those with law enforcement or criminal justice educational programs, to assist in program evaluation. The addition of academic evaluation of a particular program or short-term initiative can be invaluable to law enforcement executives.

11. Police Operated Programs, Practices and Intervention Activities

The ability of law enforcement agencies to provide educational, athletic and /or vocational training programs to youth who are at-risk, exposed to violent crime, victims of crime, or reside in communities with histories of violence can serve as a tremendous tool to reduce crime, delinquency, and victimization. Often times, the existence of these programs provides a safe haven for youth y and mentoring opportunity for the staff. It is important to point out that some at risk-youth are often not connected to a responsible adult so these programs can offer an opportunity for youth to be engaged with, and build positive relationships with law enforcement. *This is also a strong strategy for relationship-building between law enforcement and the communities they serve.*

Indicate which of the following skills-development programs for youth are conducted by your agency	☑
employment	
fitness	
computer usage	
reading	
math	
language	
mentoring	
other (list)	
Indicate which of the following intervention/prevention topics for youth are addressed by your agency	
drug abuse	
gang	
bullying	
dating/sexual assault	
underage drinking	
traffic/driving safety	
gun violence	
other (list)	

Police operated programs that offer educational, athletic, and intervention/prevention skills help to reduce crime, delinquency, and victimization of youth by providing an environment conducive to learning and development. Resources for youth, outside of the school, are often limited or in some neighborhoods, non-existent. With few other activities available, youth may easily become involved in crime and/or delinquency, either as a suspect, victim, or both.

In addition, programs that bring together youth and police can help to build trust, foster positive youth development, and promote positive youth engagement, impacting the community as a whole.

The programs listed above are not meant to be an all-inclusive inventory. Programs will vary by jurisdiction and specific need. However, the list should serve as a guide for agencies to use in establishing their own programs.

12. Police Involvement in Juvenile Diversion Programs

Diversion programs, including those operated by police departments under the supervision of juvenile justice agencies, have the ability to provide youth and law enforcement agencies alternatives to arrest. Research demonstrates that diversion programs work in bringing positive educational, behavioral and social benefits to youth and reduce future negative behavior in participating youth.

	Yes	No
Does your agency conduct any juvenile justice diversion programs separate from the juvenile court		
If yes, list program name		
Does your agency regularly conduct evaluations of the program(s)		
Does your agency collaborate with juvenile court diversion programs		

Various types of juvenile diversion programs exist. Some are operated independently of the juvenile justice system, but with their oversight, some in a more collaborative format, and some that do not involve the courts at all.

A formal agreement between agencies involved establishes the parameters of the program, including the types of cases diverted and disciplinary actions taken. Reports of closed cases may be forwarded to the juvenile justice system for their reference. A non-participation provision can be included in the agreement, which allows either the juvenile, a parent, or the victim to decline to participate in the project. In those situations, the case may be referred to the juvenile justice system for prosecution.

Regular evaluations of the program(s) should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of reducing crime, delinquency, and victimization, and preventing recidivism, providing a satisfactory resolution of the crime for the victim, and providing assistance to at-risk youth. Refer to IACP's Program Impact Tools for more information on evaluation methods.

13. Training

Mandated and optional training courses related to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization not only underscore the agency's commitment to youth but also provide a platform for officers to increase their awareness of and response to those issues. Regularly scheduled and frequent course offerings should be part of an overarching strategy.

Does your agency provide training related to youth crime, delinquency, and victimization for all personnel during	Yes	No
entrance/academy level training		
annual re-training/in-service		
advanced level course offerings		
other (list)		
Does your agency mandate youth related training courses during assignment to specialized units or functions		
upon assignment		
within 6 months of assignment		
within 12 months of assignment		
as needed		
training selected by officer/detective		
no mandatory training		
other (list)		

A comprehensive Youth Focused Policing strategy should include minimum levels of training for all employees and advanced training for officers/detectives assigned to specialized units or staff whose primary responsibility is working with juveniles (victim, suspect, student, program participant, etc.). Ideally, training courses would incorporate information about changes in federal, state and local laws, crime, delinquency, and victimization trends for youth, and progress toward agency-wide goals and objectives. All frontline officers should be trained to interact effectively with youth based on adolescent development and trauma-informed approaches to obtain better cooperation from youth, provide better life outcomes for youth, and develop better relations between police and youth in their communities.

Specialized training courses should incorporate developments in behavioral or social science research that relates to youth, updates regarding best practices and evidence based programs, and investigative methods specifically designed for juveniles (forensic interviewing, juvenile interrogation, communications, and mentoring are some examples).

A "no" response to the questions relating to entrance level and annual training classes indicates that critical information about youth related topics is not being provided to agency personnel.

Next Steps

Once your department has completed the Agency Self-Assessment Tool, you can use your responses to outline the next steps that can shape your department's prevention and response strategies to reduce juvenile offending, reoffending and victimization. The attached Action Plan Template can be used to record what actions your agency prioritizes to increase capacity to combat youth crime, delinquency, and victimization, progressing towards developing a Youth Focused Policing model in your agency.

Serving the Leaders of Today, Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow

Agency Self-Assessment Components	Current Practices (What's Working?)	Needed Changes (What is not working?)	Who will be responsible?	Timeline
Mission, Vision, Values Statements				
Policies and Procedures				
Agency Organization				

Agency Self-Assessment Components	Current Practices (What's Working?)	Needed Changes (What is not working?)	Who will be responsible?	Timeline
Personnel Assigned to Juvenile Functions				
Juvenile Information Collection				
Juvenile Crime Analysis				

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Agency Self-Assessment Components	Current Practices (What's Working?)	Needed Changes (What is not working?)	Who will be responsible?	Timeline
Access to Youth Focused Informational Databases				
Juvenile Crime Information Sharing				
Partnerships and Collaborations				

Agency Self-Assessment Components	Current Practices (What's Working?)	Needed Changes (What is not working?)	Who will be responsible?	Timeline
Best Practices or Evidence Based Programs				
Police Operated Programs, Practices and Intervention Activities				
Police Involvement in Juvenile Diversion Programs				

Agency Self-Assessment Components	Current Practices (What's Working?)	Needed Changes (What is not working?)	Who will be responsible?	Timeline
Training				