



County of Tulare

GANG PREVENTION INITIATIVE

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, JUSTICE APPROPRIATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
BYRNE DISCRETIONARY GRANTS
\$517,500

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Administration Bldg.
2800 West Burrel
Visalia, CA 93291

TEL: (559) 636-5000
FAX: (559) 733-6898

Gang activity in the unincorporated portions of Tulare County, which is over 60% minority, continues to rise. According to the Tulare County Probation Department, there was an increase of 15% in youth bookings for crimes committed between 2008 and 2009. Auto theft increased by 38%, assault and attempted murder increased by 17% and vandalism increased by 60%. All seven youth homicides in 2009 were gang related, and approximately 90% of all crimes involving juveniles in Tulare County were gang related.

The appropriations request for \$517,500 over three years will allow Tulare County to take its gang prevention activities to the next level. The request is multi-faceted and will reach at-risk youth in a number of ways: providing free and reliable transportation, open two community buildings in rural areas, and providing grant funds for 45 service learning projects.

Community Centers

A noticeably absent component of many unincorporated areas in Tulare County is the presence of a community center. Community centers provide safe, reliable, and stimulating place for students and young adults to visit after school hours and on the weekend. They can play an integral role in reducing gang activity. The requested funding would be used to purchase two community centers in areas of Tulare County that currently do not have them. After purchase of the buildings, the County will make them available to carefully selected non-profit organizations to perform services in them.

Service Learning Projects

The Step Up Service Learning Grant Program has been very successful in its first two years of operation. Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Students that participate in the projects learn work ethic, responsibility, community service and how to make a positive contribution to the community. The students also earn a small stipend for participating in the program. The County of Tulare would utilize \$375,000 in Federal funding to augment the Service Learning Grant Program, which would make the program available to Junior High and High Schools

Transportation

In the first three years of operation, the LOOP bus has provided over 2,000 at-risk youth with free transportation. Tulare County would utilize \$180,000 in each of

three continuous years to purchase one bus each year. Tulare County will fund operations costs for all three buses.

With the \$1.715 million over three years in requested funding, Tulare County will significantly upgrade its gang prevention and intervention efforts. Providing safe places to learn and recreate, opportunities to learn work ethic and community service and free transportation will take great strides toward reducing the amount of gang crime and activity in Tulare County.

Contact Information: Jean Rousseau/County Administrative Officer
(559) 636-5005
jrousseau@co.tulare.ca.us
Paul Schlesinger, Alcalde & Fay
(703) 841-0626



Ivanhoe youth boarding a LOOP bus.



Cutler-Orosi youth painting a mural as part of a Service Learning project.