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# GRIT Final Report

Gang Reduction & Intervention Task Force | City of Yakima

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## Overview

The GRIT program was funded through a Governor's Proviso which was provided to the City of Yakima from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.



Purpose of the program, per the proviso, was to develop a sustainable organized response to gang activity and youth violence utilizing evidence-based resources.

After convening focus groups it was decided to focus efforts on intervening with 6<sup>th</sup> graders attracted to gangs.

Three main elements of the approach developed by the Proviso money:

1. Village
2. Health Promoter/Promotor
3. Intervention Specialist

Strategic oversight was provided by the Steering Committee with help from a paid Coordinator, and City staff.

## Steering Committee

- Provides strategic oversight and meets monthly
- Includes members from stakeholder sectors: Yakima School District, Yakima County (Prosecutor), Health Care (Yakima Valley Farmworkers' Clinic), Juvenile Justice (Probation Department), YPD, a community member familiar with gang activity and City Council members.
- Passed a Charter and Bylaws which provides the permanent structure to GRIT and its governing body—the Steering Committee
- **FUTURE:** The Steering Committee will determine in the next few months its future role. It is likely that the committee will meet less frequently but continue its work on strategizing for a comprehensive plan to address gang activity and violence in Yakima.





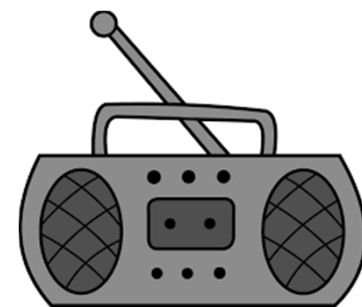
## The Village

- A coalition of stakeholders that want to provide youth in Yakima opportunities, encourage them to make good decisions, and work to decrease gang membership, affiliation and violence.
- Meetings were held every other month during the proviso period. Agenda items were determined by the group and included time for networking among attendees.
- Goal was to help build capacity and collaboration among service providers and stakeholders and create community based solutions for this community issue.
- Next meeting: August 7, 2019 from 12:00pm—2:00pm at Comprehensive Health Care's Auditorium.
- **FUTURE:** It is foreseen that Village meetings will continue with support from non-profit organizations and the City even though there is currently no funding to support the meetings.





## Prevention Strategy



- Contracted with Rocío Carrión and Radio KDNA for weekly radio interviews that discussed prevention measures, community health issues (ACEs, trauma informed care) information about gang influences and mannerisms, youth opportunities, health care and resources for youth and families—geared towards adults
- Radio interviews and ads were also run on Townsquare Media platforms. These spots were shorter and geared more towards youth.
- **FUTURE:** There is no plan or funding to continue the radio interviews. Although the radio interviews were well done and informative, it is difficult to measure the effect of those interviews for both youth and adults. Strategies should be developed to ensure that information about services, programs and activities are disseminated in multiple media formats and in language that is familiar to the targeted audience.

## Yakima Youth Leadership Pilot Program

### Participants:

6 boys, 4 girls  
2 middle schools

Program: From March  
through June

Met with the  
intervention specialist  
an average of 13.8  
times for an average  
of 30 minutes per  
session

Topics addressed by  
intervention specialist  
during sessions:

Effective Communication  
Social Media Awareness  
Drug Awareness  
Gang Awareness  
Harassment/Bullying  
Conflict Resolution  
Family/Belonging

Program components created:

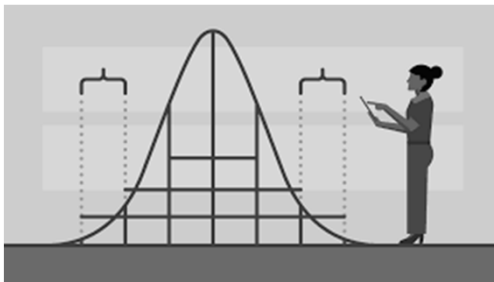
1. Eligibility criteria for the program.
2. Surveys and Interview questions
3. General curriculum (see topics)
4. Incentive challenges
5. Record keeping data sheets
6. Good working relationships with YSD and ESD 105

By creating these items, the program is ready to be implemented when funding is available.

# Data: “The Evaluation of a Pilot Intervention “Now is the Time 2” to Reduce Gang Violence in Yakima, Washington

Final Report by Julia van Olphen, Researcher, and Karla Villanueva, GRIT Intern

- Final Report dated July 11, 2019 took into account data from the following:
  1. Statistics on the demographics, income, and gang activity in Yakima
  2. Surveys conducted at Village Meetings
  3. Initial surveys completed by participating youth and their guardians
  4. Surveys with teachers and staff at the two participating schools
  5. In depth interviews with youth and their guardians at the end of the program



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## MAJOR FINDINGS:

1. The Village increased networking and collaboration among agencies serving youth and families
2. GPA and Attendance of most students involved in the Yakima Youth Leadership Program improved
3. Students’ attitudes and behaviors improved
4. Students’ communication with peers, teachers and parents generally improved.

\*The intervention specialist met with each student an average of 13.8 times, 30 minutes each time, during the program.\*



# Data: “The Evaluation of a Pilot Intervention “Now is the Time 2” to Reduce Gang Violence in Yakima, Washington

Final Report by Julia van Olphen, Researcher, and Karla Villanueva, GRIT Intern

Goal 1: Develop the capacity of the City of Yakima to reduce gang violence by building a network of organizations and individuals working with youth and families.

1. Meetings were well attended—contact sheet of interested organizations and persons is approximately 150 entries
2. New organizations and members continue to attend meetings.

Goal 2: Increase networking and collaboration among agencies serving youth and families.

1. Participants learned about programs to which they could refer people.
2. Meeting provided a valuable space where they could learn about resources and make connections.

*We had one of our ... middle school youth tag our facility and, after being caught, I was able to reach out to another participant of the GRIT village meetings that I would not have been aware of before. This other participant is a reformed gang member who offered his time to come and speak to this youth and the family. --Village Participant*

***Several agencies in one place gave us the opportunity to make some important contacts and future partnerships. –Village Participant***

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## Short-term outcomes for participating youth:

1. GPA of 6 of 10 students increased slightly.
2. Increased regular attendance through incentives.
3. Disciplinary actions were reduced for some students, but others still experienced suspensions during the program.

## Youth perception of how program impacted communication skills:

1. Over ½ of the participants interviewed said they learned about conflict resolution.
2. All but 1 of the participants interviewed expressed positive changes in how they interact with teachers.
3. 2x as many of the participants interviewed indicated they enjoyed spending time with the adults they live with at the end of the program

## Guardian perceptions:

1. Most of the guardians interviewed (6/8) noted their child communicates with them more than before the program.
2. ½ of the guardians interviewed expressed that the relationship between their child and themselves changed for the better in some way.

***[Working with the mentor] motivated me. It made me want to change and start to behave more.***

***He [the mentor] told me to walk away from something that's not right. If something's wrong, then you walk away. Don't be a part of it.***

# Data: “The Evaluation of a Pilot Intervention “Now is the Time 2” to Reduce Gang Violence in Yakima, Washington

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Students, Guardians and School Staff were asked for suggestions for future programs and opportunities.

1. Students suggested more programming and activities.
2. Guardians suggested more programs for youth, including non-sports and middle school level programming. Parent-focused programming was also suggested.
3. School Staff suggested satellite programs of after school activities in neighborhoods adjacent to schools or at the schools themselves. School Staff also expressed the need for parent engagement and long-term mentorship opportunities for youth.

One youth participant indicated that youth need to have someone to talk to and share their feelings, suggesting the following from the intervention specialist:

*I would ask them first how they feel about themselves and how they think they're going to be in the future.... “Do you think that in the future you will have a good life? Do you think the things you are doing right now are going to affect you in the future?” I would definitely ask them that.*

## Funding and Sustainability

- **Funding Necessary:** Funding is necessary for both the Village activities and the Yakima Youth Leadership Program. The City may continue to organize the Village and Steering Committee meetings until funding is obtained.
- **Pending Funding Requests**
  - The City of Yakima, partnering with the Yakima School District and ESD 105, applied for an OJJDP Youth Gang Suppression Implementation Grant (\$230,000 total over 36 months). The money would fund 4 part time middle school education advocates to act as intervention specialists with a case load of 10 students at a time. Estimated to serve 50-75 youth and their families each year.
  - GRIT was part of OIC of Washington's recent OJJDP grant application for mentoring programs for youth involved in the juvenile justice system (ages 12-17). The grant is for \$500,000 over 3 years for mentoring services to low-risk youth offenders. The project, if funded, would provide mentoring to 45 youth per year.
- **Future Funding Opportunities**
  - Staff continues to look for opportunities to obtain funding to continue the GRIT approach and the Yakima Youth Leadership Program, including private and foundation grants.
  - State and federal grants for gang reduction and intervention efforts.
  - This may become a focus of the Steering Committee

# Questions?



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