

City of Hampton Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment Application

Needs Statement

The City of Hampton, Virginia seeks funding to complete a community based assessment of the scope, root causes and effects of youth and gang violence in order to better design prevention and intervention services moving forward. The key component of the proposed assessment is the involvement of community based organizations and individuals perceived by the community as credible messengers in both the formulation and implementation of the assessment plan.

Hampton, Virginia is a moderately sized, relatively urban city located in the Tidewater region of the state. In a current web posting, the organization neighborhoodscout.com reports that, "The chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime in Hampton is 1 in 30. Based on FBI crime data, Hampton is not one of the safest communities in America. Relative to Virginia, Hampton has a crime rate that is higher than 94% of the state's cities and towns of all sizes." (<https://www.neighborhoodscout.com>)

In 2013, the City experienced a spike in homicides with 22 homicide victims reported. That was nearly 2.5 times the number of homicides that occurred in 2012 and in 2011. The victims were predominantly African Americans (86%), most of whom were males. The majority of these victims were between the ages of 14 and 30 (77%). As a result, citizens, city leaders, and multiple city agencies took a multi-pronged approach to violence reduction which resulted in the formation of Hampton United.

In 2014, the group saw the need for full time staff support so the city hired a full time Youth Violence Prevention Program Manager. Building on the foundation established by Hampton United, the Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities (formerly Youth Violence Prevention) was tasked with supporting youth violence prevention efforts and has been working to galvanize support, build relationships with allies (likely and unlikely), and identify resources to move this work from planning to implementation. As a result, multiple program modifications were made including a summer youth employment program, a start-up grant program for youth violence prevention, the addition of two public safety sponsored summer camps for youth, and multiple community events aimed at reducing youth violence. The work had an effect; there was an overall drop of 8.37% in Group A Offenses from 2015 - 2019. In the same period, there was a 4.8% drop in serious violent crimes (murder, including nonnegligent manslaughter, robbery and aggravated assault) and there were just 15 homicides in 2019.

Unfortunately, the current crime data for the city is alarming. In 2020, there were 23 murders constituting an increase of 53.33% over the previous year as well as a 4.55% increase in aggravated assault. 15 of the 23 deaths were the result of gun violence. Overall, there were 400 victims of gun violence in 2020 when robbery and aggravated assault are added to homicide. 34.3% of those victims were under the age of 25 and 8.8% of them were juveniles. 41.5% of these serious offenses involving firearms were perpetrated by individuals under the age of 25 and 16.1% were committed by juvenile offenders.

Concerned about the recurrence of gun violence in early 2020, the City Mayor convened a group, the *Mayor's Gun Violence Roundtable*, to discuss the causes, effects and potential solutions to gun violence, especially youth violence. The city's Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities used the forum provided by the Mayor's group to gather information from participants to help plan prevention and intervention efforts. Gathered through surveys and focus group discussions with young people, data identified three critical focus areas: mental health support, family support, and the need for out of school time activities. It is notable that the young people with whom the discussions were held had a very different opinion than was offered by the adults, particularly interested citizens and staff. This, in turn, highlighted how vital it is to gain information not just from citizens who regularly engage with city departments, but rather from citizens of all age groups, from all neighborhoods, from all socio-economic groups and most particularly from those exposed to or affected by violence.

Unfortunately, in surveys conducted both by the school division and the city, participation rates are not always robust. Further, in some instances, respondents hesitate to be fully forthcoming when engaging with city staff if they perceive they may be judged or if they believe the information might potentially harm them in some way, e.g. unwilling to share a problem with substance abuse for fear of social services taking their children. In order to gain an accurate and complete picture of the extent, causes, and effects of youth and gang violence, it is necessary to involve trusted community members and organizations, relying on their established relationships and engagement to elicit the participation of and honest information from all members of the community.

Project Description

Based on the data shared in the needs statement the City of Hampton is rightfully concerned about youth violence. The project is being designed to build on an assessment completed in 2016 by Cities United that focused on data from internal

systems. This assessment shared which city agencies would need to collaborate to create a multi-year plan of action to provide an integrated response to violence-related deaths by addressing criminal activity, workforce development, mental health, educational opportunities, literacy, and family engagement. The assessment provided aggregate key demographic data on families, housing, education, employment, and criminal justice about the Hampton, VA community, as well information about existing resources and infrastructure. The Youth and Grant Community Assessment funding will be used to build on the 2016 report by engaging the community, those impacted by violence and credible messengers regarding their concerns related to youth violence.

Hampton United was formed in 2014 and comprises over 20 representatives from internal and external agencies. Hampton United is a focused committee of government, civic and community leaders dedicated to reducing violence and improving the quality of life for African American males through policy, programs, and community action. The Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment project will partner with and support a community based effort composed of credible messengers and community champions as they develop and implement surveys and design focus groups that will be held in neighborhoods experiencing higher rates of violence and deployed to those who are impacted by violence. The survey will be developed to identify reasons for becoming engaged in violence, awareness of positive resources, trauma, and other concerns as identified by the full work group. An internal group will be convened using members of Hampton United (Tier II) to update the data from 2016 and to assist with getting surveys completed by clients in their program areas. Both groups will work together to identify the evidence-based programs or strategies that are most appropriate for the City of Hampton after analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data. Community engagement and awareness are critical components of this effort. The community-based arm will be able to utilize engagement strategies that work best for each neighborhood or audience. We will begin with a community awareness campaign about the effort to support response and participation. Our community-based arm will engage with citizens at barbershops, salons, convenience stores, sporting events, and other places where youth, young adults and families gather. Special events and activities will also be built around these locations. Community canvassing will also take place. Whenever possible families will be engaged to gain the perspective of each member. This data will provide additional data on how families are impacted by violence.

Over the last year the City of Hampton has been researching evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs, due to the rise in youth and gun violence in Hampton. In the fall of 2020 staffing additions were approved for the Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities to support a comprehensive violence reduction model.

The addition of staff was justified based on research made available by Cities United in the following publications: 4 Proven Ways, Intervention for Reducing Violence and Its Consequences for Young Black Men and Boys, and A Strategic Resource for Mayors on Disrupting Community Violence and Preventing Homicides. This assessment will help us tailor identified strategies to ensure effectiveness in our locality. The need to address youth violence in Hampton is clear. A report prepared by the University of Virginia School of Law titled "Opportunities for Early Intervention with At-Risk Youth in Hampton, VA" cited the following information from the Department of Juvenile Justice.

- The Juveniles in Hampton are disproportionately represented as criminal offenders (26%).
- Hampton youth are committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice's custody more frequently than youth in most other localities.
- Hampton youth face economic barriers at a higher rate than the state average.
- Hampton youth committed to DJJ custody experience high rates of school discipline and mental health challenges.
- Hampton youth at the deep end of the juvenile justice system have experienced significant trauma.

We are currently exploring establishing an interagency team that would utilize waivers to allow information sharing to begin working with youth and young adults before they become entrenched in the justice system or when they become identified for other services outside of the court system. This will also be a tool for credible messengers as they connect opportunity youth and young adults to comprehensive services. The Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment will determine which services are necessary, and how they will be implemented to benefit the targeted audience of youth involved in violence. The City of Hampton also works closely with credible messengers, grassroots organizations and across disciplines (human services, victim services, education, recreation, etc.) when addressing complex issues like youth violence. The experiences of those who were previously involved in the criminal justice system provides guidance and clear references for system alterations. It is also important that we validate the input of those who are providing services or case management to young people who are involved or at risk of being involved in violence. Providers and case managers are best suited to identify opportunities to improve service delivery. While the data shows that black males are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system in Hampton, it is important that we are thoughtful in our efforts to educate and engage the community as we do not want the unintended consequence of vilifying black men in today's climate.

Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment Work Group Composition

Office of Youth and Young Adult Opportunities

Department of Human Services

Commonwealth Attorney

Victim Services

Court Service Unit

Community Based/Grassroots Organizations=

Riverside Hand In Hand Hospital Based Violence Intervention Program

Credible Messengers

Mayors Gun Violence Roundtable

Faith Community

Impacted Youth, Young Adults, and Families

The plan for completing the City of Hampton Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment will largely focus on contracting the process out to community based organizations and credible messengers. An initial group will be convened for a full day retreat to develop the survey instrument and outline additional processes. Next, over a three week period the survey will be deployed using community engagement and canvassing. Modest incentives will be offered for survey completion. The data will be exported and provided to a research consultant who will analyze and generate a report of their findings and recommend the violence reduction strategy that is best suited to address violence in the City of Hampton.

Budget Narrative

Survey Development Retreat \$1,000

Youth and Gang Violence Community Assessment Work Group will be convened for a full day retreat to develop the survey instrument. Community based organizations, credible messengers, youth and young adults will be compensated for their time at a rate of \$100 for the day. City employees and those who are representing their organization in a paid capacity will not be compensated. **10 Individuals x \$100= \$1,000**

Survey Development and Canvassing \$10,000

We will contract with community members, credible messengers, youth and young adults to work within neighborhoods experiencing higher rates of violence for survey completion over a three week period.

$\$20/\text{hr} \times 10 \text{ hours/week} \times 3 \text{ weeks} \times 16 \text{ individuals} = \$9,600.$

$\$20/\text{hr} \times 20 \text{ contingency hours} = \400

Data Analysis and Report Development \$3,000

We will contract with a research consultant to have the data analyzed and a report compiled to support the selection of the violence reduction strategy that is most appropriate for the City of Hampton. $\$50/\text{hr} \times 60 \text{ hours} = \$3,000$

Printing \$300

Printing flyers and posters with project information to support awareness.

Advertising \$1,200

Radio, Television, and Social Media Marketing to share the survey information, advertise community events and familiarize the community with the canvassing process. Flyer development.

Incentives \$5,000

Community organization incentives-incentive for community based organizations to support survey completion in targeted areas $\$10 \text{ per survey} \times 125 \text{ surveys} = \$1,250$

Community organization participant incentive-youth and young adult participants connected to a community organization who complete a survey $\$10 \text{ gift card} \times 125 = \$1,250$

Individual survey incentive- individuals who complete surveys $\$10 \text{ gift card} \times 125 = \$1,250$

Services Incentive- surveys completed during barbershop, nail salon, convenience store pop ups $\$10 \text{ for service, or gift card. } \$10 \times 125 = \$1,250$

Community Events \$4,500

3 community events will be held in high traffic and/or areas where we have seen an increase in violence to promote community engagement, show positive social norms and support survey completion. Funds will be allotted to cover stipends for community based organizations, survey incentives, entertainment and COVID safety protocols. Each organization will be allotted $\$1,500$ for their event. $\$1,500 \times 3 \text{ events} = \$4,500$



Department of Criminal Justice Services Project Goals and Objectives Form

Applicants must complete and submit a *Project Plan* with their application. It is recommended that applicants choose one goal and no more than three objectives. Each objective must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Related to the project goal, and Time-bound (SMART). A separate form must be submitted for each objective.

Please use Times New Roman, 11 point. The text boxes will expand to accommodate text. Insert additional rows, if needed, for Activities. Otherwise, please do not alter the form.

1. Purpose Area	Comprehensive Needs Assessment												
2. Goal	To obtain an accurate and complete picture of the extent, the causes, and the effects of youth and gang violence in Hampton to inform the work of prevention and intervention effectively.	6. Mark months in which implementation step occurs											
3. Objective	Recruitment and Training of Community Organizations and Credible Messengers	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
4. Grant Start/End Dates	Jan 1, 2021 - Sept 30, 2021												
5. Activities													
Develop recruitment communications - written and oral to explain the purpose and potential outcomes of the needs assessment as well as why it is critical for a community based approach													X
Set training dates and schedule organizations and individuals													X
Provide training in survey deployment, in focus group facilitation, and in structured interview facilitation, (including use of note takers and data collection instruments) dependent on the data collection method most conducive to complete and honest information with particular populations													



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3. Objective	Data Analysis and Reporting			X									
4. Grant Start/End Dates	Jan 1, 2021 - Sept 30, 2021												
5. Activities		Survey data downloaded											
		Focus group and interview data collected from organizations and individuals											
		Focus group and interview data coded for analysis											
		Survey data analyzed											
		Report prepared and delivered											

