



# COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice

## Successful Practices & Strategies

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# Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

Sacramento, California

[www.sacsheriff.com](http://www.sacsheriff.com)

Community policing element

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Problem/issue

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Community partnerships

Gangs

### Problem description

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In 2009, the result of the nation's financial troubles culminated in the decimation of the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department (SCSD). Unable to curb budget deficits, the department released more than 400 law enforcement personnel from employment and caused a wave of problems throughout the county.

The response time to pending calls, criteria used to establish secondary investigations, and prosecution guidelines were in a constant state of flux. During the same period, the citizens of Sacramento County also experienced higher unemployment rates, the end of many useful programs, and fewer publicly accessible resources. A significant result of this tumultuous time came in the form of increased youth gang membership and violence culminating with increased gang-related homicides in 2011.

### Community policing strategies implemented

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As a result of the COPS Office grant, the SCSD created the IMPACT program. The program's design consisted of three separate units working collaboratively to curb youth gang violence:

- **The IMPACT Youth Services Unit.** The grant allowed six deputy sheriffs and one sheriff sergeant to focus on youth outreach and provide exposure to kids in practical life-enhancing programs as an alternative to gang membership.
- **The IMPACT Gang Suppression Unit.** The grant resources provided the ability to obtain funding for nine officers dedicated toward the investigation and arrest of gang members. The task force membership increased after gaining regional support from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- **The IMPACT Intelligence Operations Group.** The grant allowed the distribution of four intelligence deputies assigned to investigations and corrections. The group works directly with gang teams and other regional units.



This full-spectrum targeting of regional gang problems has drawn significant support from neighboring local, state, and federal agencies. Neighboring agencies were so supportive of the program that many executives provided additional staff to work with the grant-funded personnel. This bolstered the Gang Suppression Unit into a 31-person task force comprised of four different teams.

## Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

The regional impact is both tangible and systemic. The 360-degree gang responsive IMPACT program, made possible by COPS Office resources, is rapidly changing the quality of life for citizens in the Sacramento region. Unlike a traditional program of arresting, prosecuting, and providing after school programs, the IMPACT focus redefined collaboration.

For the IMPACT Youth Service Unit, the mission of the program is to control the law enforcement message that residents and youth receive. In addition to providing positive interactions during high-risk times when youth are more susceptible to gang-related activities, the Youth Services Unit impacts kids by providing them positive contacts instead of only encountering law enforcement during a negative situation. Last, through activities and events, the youth gain a positive understanding on the community, thereby reducing the capacity of gangs to recruit them. To date, the Youth Services Unit has developed 33 different programs and provided unique opportunities to more than 37,000 youths.

While the Youth Services Unit plan is to work with the communities, the Gang Suppression Unit focuses its energy on investigating and arresting gang members operating in the Sacramento Region. By diligently investigating criminal organizations, the Gang Suppression Unit collects various pieces of information needed by the Intelligence Operations Group. By working together, the Gang Suppression Unit and the Intelligence Operations Group determine the center of gravity associated with the different gangs and target the elite members of the organizations. To date, there have been 521 arrests, 561 firearms seized, over 7 lbs of cocaine, 5 oz of heroin, 500 lbs of marijuana, and 10 lbs of methamphetamine.

For the Intelligence Operations Group, the mission is to collect all of the available information and save it into one network that is 28 CFR Part 23 compliant. The group supports the Youth Services Unit by examining the communities and identifying the areas in which youths might be more susceptible to recruitment. In addition, the group collects community and youth surveys as a process of monitoring the region's gang exposure. On the enforcement side, the group collects all of the Gang Suppression Unit information and determines the elite members of the organizations. By targeting the leaders, gangs have difficulty maintaining the continuity of operations. To date, the Intelligence Operations Group has collected and analyzed more than 500,000 individual items of information.



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