



Date: September 19, 2022

To: Wanda S. Page, City Manager
Through: W. Bowman Ferguson, Deputy City Manager
From: Ryan Smith, Director of Community Safety
Subject: Renewing City-County ILA for Gang Reduction Strategy for FY23

Executive Summary

The City-County Interlocal Agreement in support of Durham’s Gang Reduction Strategy historically includes funding to support the County’s Gang Reduction Strategy Manager as well as the County’s Project BUILD (Building Uplifting Improving Lives Daily). Last fiscal year, the City Council revised this agreement with Durham County to remove a one-time expense to conduct an updated gang assessment. This year’s FY23 Interlocal Agreement includes no changes other than updating the costs associated with annual increases in salary and including language that would allow the contract to renew for up to 5 one-year terms pending appropriation of funds in the annual budgets of the City and County.

Motion

To resolve that the City Manager be authorized to renew an Interlocal Agreement with Durham County for an amount not to exceed \$174,805 to support the Durham County Gang Reduction Strategy and Project BUILD.

Background

Durham’s Gang Reduction Strategy (GRS) developed as a response to recommendations from the Comprehensive Gang Assessment that was commissioned by the City and County and completed in November 2007. The Gang Assessment highlighted the need for a coordinated approach that includes prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies to reduce criminal activity committed by persons who are members of gangs.

The GRS agreement includes funding for 0.5 FTE of the GRS Manager position who oversees the GRS Steering Committee, and for 1.33 FTEs for staff supporting the County’s Project BUILD as well as some operational costs. Two years ago, the ILA was revised to also include additional funding to update the County’s Comprehensive Gang Assessment. The updated assessment was funded in FY21 and completed in FY22.

Issues and Analysis

The updated Comprehensive Gang Assessment includes 5 key findings and recommendations directly quoted below from pages 8 – 9 of the report (see attached full report for more details):

Key findings from Comprehensive Gang Assessment

- **Key finding 1: What is the most acute problem related to gangs/violence in Durham and where is it most acute?** At least 12 census tracts/neighborhoods in Durham are currently affected by extremely high rates of violent person incidents

(aggravated assault and homicide) that are up to 7.5 times higher than Durham's overall rate per capita of these crimes. Eight of these census tracts have experienced high rates of violence since the last community gang assessment was conducted in Durham. Violence exposure in these areas is exacerbated by extreme poverty and exposure to other social vulnerabilities that have remained mostly unchanged since 2014.

- **Key finding 2: Why are youth in Durham joining gangs? What risk factors locally must be addressed to keep youth out of gangs?** Young people in Durham experience an elevated level of exposure to risk factors for gang involvement, including substance use, delinquency, the presence of gangs in their neighborhood and at school, family gang involvement, victimization, and exposure to violence. This level of risk exposure is higher for youth who enter the juvenile justice system and highest for gang involved individuals.
- **Key finding 3: What is keeping young people in gangs? What must be addressed to help gang-involved individuals exit gangs?** Research indicates that young people who join gangs become disconnected from mainstream pursuits. Gang involved individuals in Durham have difficulty exiting gangs because of high rates of school dropout, unemployment/ underemployment, substance use, gang activity in the neighborhood, and a need to replace the social and emotional needs currently met by their gang.
- **Key finding 4: How is this issue affecting the wider community? What should motivate policymakers to address the problem?** People who live and work in Durham experience the gang issue very differently depending on their role and location. In some neighborhoods, gangs are deeply imbedded in the neighborhood's culture which plays a key role in the decision to join a gang in Durham. Other neighborhoods experience gang issues indirectly. However, surveys across constituency groups indicates that the widespread nature of gang activity and community violence in Durham reduces quality of life for residents across the community.
- **Key finding 5: How well is the current response to gangs working? What should be done differently in the future?** All constituency groups that participated in this study described low levels of satisfaction with the current response to gangs and identified specific deficits that have caused this dissatisfaction. These issues include a failure to address the underlying conditions that give rise to gangs, a lack of awareness about the current 9 responses to gangs across constituency groups, lack of information about the results of current strategies, and concerns about criminal justice policies.

Recommendations from Comprehensive Gang Assessment

1. Implement intensive, place-based strategies to address underlying social conditions that increase the vulnerability of children and youth in the most violence affected census tracts to gang involvement
2. Implement comprehensive, intensive, and neighborhood-based service delivery specifically for gang-involved individuals in the highest violence neighborhoods.

3. Because of the elevated level of gang exposure/involvement and youth risk exposure locally, Durham policymakers should expand available gang prevention and intervention programming, localize these services in the most violence/gang affected census tracts, and prioritize these services for children and youth who are at the highest level of risk of involvement in violence and gangs
4. More regularly collect and report data that reflects the progress of the community's gang violence reduction efforts.
5. Institute standardized performance measures to track reductions in violence and improve existing criminogenic social conditions at the census tract level and more regularly report the outcomes attained by gang prevention, intervention and desistance strategies to policymakers and the community at the census tract level.
- 6.

The Gang Reduction Strategy Manager and a representative from Project Build will be available at the work session to answer any questions from City Council.

Financial Impact

The FY23 cost to the City of Durham for this agreement shall not exceed \$174,805, a slight increase from the FY22 cost of \$170,745. Funding for this contract was included in the FY23 approved budget.

Consistent with previous ILAs for GRS, this amount includes funding for:

- 1/2 FTE of the GRS Manager position
- 1 FTE for Project BUILD
- 1/3 of the annual cost of a bilingual outreach worker
- A portion of the operational costs associated with Project BUILD

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

Due to the nature of this agenda item, this is not applicable.

Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices

Due to the nature of this agenda item, obtaining Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices information is not applicable.

Attachments

The following 4 attachments are included:

- FY23 City-County Interlocal Agreement for the Continuation of the GRS Strategy
- FY23 Agreement Attachment -- Budget
- [2021 Durham County Gang Assessment Final Report](#) (published Feb. 28, 2022)
- Project BUILD FY22 Success Story