



CITY OF HOUSTON MAYOR'S ANTI-GANG OFFICE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

PATRICIA HARRINGTON, DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 1562 HOUSTON, TEXAS 77251
PHONE: (832) 393-0931 FAX: (832) 393-0903
WWW.HOUSTONTX/ANTIGANG

The mission of the Anti-Gang Office is to provide comprehensive responses to gang activity and juvenile delinquency through direct services, collaboration, education, and policy development.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GANG AND DELINQUENCY INTERVENTION

Counselors provide intervention services to high risk, gang involved and delinquent youth to deter their involvement in gangs and the juvenile justice system, develop positive changes in their behavior, and direct them away from a delinquent mind-set. Assistance is also provided to family members.

YOUTH AND FAMILY WORKSHOPS

Workshops build awareness and resistance skills. Topics include understanding delinquency, personal accountability and responsibility, consequences of actions, managing emotions, conflict resolution, making positive choices, healthy parenting, family communication, gang resistance and substance abuse awareness.

SUMMER YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Weekly activities during the summer break are designed to encourage pro-social skills and positive behavior, and develop self esteem and respect for others.

MENTORING

Traditional one-on-one and group mentoring programs are designed to increase positive youth development, cultivate strong mentors, and support families.

OUTREACH - EDUCATION

Prevention presentations for youth to educate them on the dangers and consequences of gang involvement; awareness presentations for adults to assist them in identifying and addressing gang involvement within their families and communities; training presentations to build the skill sets of personnel who work with young people; community events.

For more information contact the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office at (832) 393-0931

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GANGS

DEFINITION OF A GANG - Texas Penal Code Sec. 71.01 (d)

Three (3) or more individuals having a common identifying sign, symbol or identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

REASONS YOUTH JOIN GANGS

There are many reasons why youth join gangs and they recruit males and females of all ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. They often appeal to young people because they believe the gang will meet needs they have that aren't being fulfilled. This includes a need for family, friends, love, and a sense of belonging to something.

Other reasons:

- They think they'll get respect.
- They want status or recognition.
- Their friends or other family members are gang involved.
- They feel they need protection from bullies or rival gangs.
- They think it's cool or exciting to be in a gang.
- They have access to drugs, alcohol, weapons, sex.
- They can get money by committing crimes with the gang.

WARNING SIGNS OF GANG INVOLVEMENT

- Use of an unfamiliar nickname, slang, or hand signs.
- Carrying a bandanna.
- Favoring certain colors; avoiding others.
- Graffiti or tattoos depicting gang names, initials, numbers, crowns, pitchforks, stars.
- Signs of physical abuse, drug/alcohol use.
- Discipline problems at home or school.
- Truancy and/or poor grades.
- Unexplained money, clothes, jewelry, or other items not given by you.

HOW TO DETER YOUTH FROM JOINING A GANG

Most gang members say they joined their gang because no one was paying attention to them or seemed to care what they were doing until it was too late. The most effective way to keep youth from joining gangs is to be involved with them. If parents and caregivers don't spend time with their kids, the gang will.

- Talk to young people and let them know you support them. Listen too.
- Encourage their participation in positive activities.
- Limit unsupervised time and know their friends.
- Establish rules and be consistent with discipline.
- Discuss the dangers and consequences of gang involvement with them.
- Don't allow gang related behavior or displays of gang affiliation.