

Systems Change Through the Youth Strategies Grant: Fiscal Years 2001 & 2002

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- Center of Health Promotion, Education, and Tobacco Use Prevention, DHMH;
- Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA), DHMH;
- Social Services Administration, Department of Human Resources (DHR);
- Community Resource Development, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ);
- Safe and Drug Free Schools Program (SDFS), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE);
- Combating Underage Drinking and Youth Strategies Grants Units; the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP); and
- Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy, Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF).

We are grateful to OCYF and GOCCP for allowing us to attend the state-level prevention meetings that have taken place over the last year to get a first-hand view of their deliberations. In addition, we appreciate the efforts and patience of the Local Management Board directors around the State who spent a considerable amount of time explaining the work of their boards and their participation in the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant planning process, as well as giving us materials to review for further insight. Finally, we are grateful to the many Juvenile Justice Representatives, Prevention Coordinators, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, Lead HotSpot Coordinators, and local Law Enforcement Representatives across the State who contributed valuable information during their interviews regarding their participation in local youth programs, collaborations, training, and youth strategies planning committees.

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	1
II. Introduction	9
A. Overview of Project	9
B. The State Prevention Strategy	9
C. The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.....	10
III. Methodology	12
A. Sampling and Response Rates	12
B. Questionnaire Development and Data Collection.....	14
C. Attending State-Level Prevention Meetings.....	15
IV. Findings for the State Prevention Strategy	16
A. Overview	16
B. Findings from State-Level Prevention Meetings	16
C. Findings from Interviews with State Agency Representatives	20
D. Conclusions.....	26
V. Findings for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant	28
A. Overview	28
B. Findings on the Consolidation of the Youth Strategies Grant.....	28
C. Findings from Interviews with Local Management Board Directors	30
D. Findings from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant Planning Committees.....	35
VI. Summary	49
VII. Appendices	51
A. Appendix A – State Agency Survey	
B. Appendix B – Local Coordinator Survey	
C. Appendix C – LMB Director Survey	
D. Appendix D – Consent Form	
E. Appendix E – Recommendations for Improving Outcomes for Children and their Families	
F. Appendix F – Implementation Plan	
G. Appendix G – Data Limitations	
H. Appendix H – Measurement of Collaborations Prior to the Youth Strategies Grant	
I. Appendix I – Comments on Research-Based Programs	
J. Appendix J – Comments on the Future of the Youth Strategies Grant	

I. Executive Summary

Overview of Project

Maryland is promoting systems change to improve the way in which prevention and youth programs are strategically planned, funded, and delivered. Last year Maryland embarked upon two distinct but related efforts. The first was aimed at developing and implementing a statewide prevention strategy. The second, the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, combined multiple funding streams to empower communities to coordinate services and programs for children and youth into a research-based, data-driven continuum of care.

The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) contracted with the University of Maryland's Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) and the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice to evaluate both of these efforts. CESAR was tasked with evaluating systems change at the state and local levels. The University's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice was asked to conduct an outcome evaluation of programs supported by the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant and to produce a manual of effective, prevention-related, research-based programs.

This report is the first in a series in which CESAR will present findings from its evaluation of systems change at the state and local levels. Descriptive baseline data from FY 2001 and more current data from FY 2002 are the focus of this report.

We begin by describing the State prevention strategy and the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. Within each effort we will describe CESAR's first year evaluation activities, followed by key findings and conclusions.

The State Prevention Strategy

The State prevention strategy is overseen by the Maryland Partnership and the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Justice. An Executive Order signed by the Governor re-constituted the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice and established four standing committees. The Community Based Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support committee was charged with overseeing the development of a prevention plan. Thus far, meetings have been convened for the purpose of having key State agencies develop and implement an interagency statewide prevention strategy. The overall vision for this statewide initiative is ensuring that children are healthy and safe in their families and communities. The strategy addresses sixteen areas of prevention, as measured by the target indicators of Maryland's Results for Child Well-Being.

Two questions regarding the State's strategy were initially addressed in CESAR's year-one evaluation:

- 1. Did the State produce a comprehensive, interagency, statewide strategic plan for prevention?*
- 2. Did the State implement that plan?*

In order to begin to answer these questions, CESAR conducted baseline interviews with representatives of eight State agencies¹ regarding the State system of prevention that existed in Fiscal Year 2001, prior to the initiation of the State prevention strategy. Supporting documentation was reviewed. In addition, CESAR observed all 20 State-level prevention meetings since July 2001 (Fiscal Year 2002) and documented the progress that was made toward crafting a State prevention strategy.

Key Findings from the Evaluation of the State Prevention Strategy

- In FY 2001:
 - None of the eight State agencies could name an existing comprehensive statewide prevention strategy covering multiple areas of prevention.
 - State agencies emphasized a few similar elements regarding their theoretical frameworks toward prevention (e.g., five agencies mentioned research-based programming, using a collaborative approach, and meeting community needs and/or having community involvement), but the impression was that there was no unifying prevention theory or definition across State agencies.
 - A measurement of the average frequency of State agency collaborations showed that informal collaborations, such as information sharing, were much more common than were more formal collaborations, such as the integration of prevention services.
 - Five of the eight agencies reported that federal or State prevention funds were not coordinated at all or only to a minor extent.
- Recommendations were developed and approved by the State Advisory Board of Juvenile Justice and the Maryland Partnership in December 2001 for developing a statewide prevention strategy.
- An implementation plan was developed in January 2002 with 63 action items. The major objectives are:
 1. To foster State and local prevention planning;
 2. To improve linkages concerning coordinated strategies and programs; and
 3. To create mechanisms to provide technical assistance and training to support Maryland's prevention delivery system.
- To date, the following activities in the implementation plan have been completed: 1) the creation and distribution of an inventory form to be used by State agencies to gather information on prevention programs, funding, and training; 2) the statewide use of a DJJ substance abuse and mental health screening tool; 3) the creation of a Blueprints manual that identifies proven research-based prevention program models and strategies; and 4) the scheduling of trainings by region for local youth strategies grant partners.

¹ State agencies refer to State cabinet level agencies, the Governor's offices, and units of these agencies. For the sake of brevity, the term agencies will be used in the report instead of agencies and agency units.

- Prevention staff resources at the State level are very limited. Seven of the eight State agencies have an average of only 3.4 full time equivalent staff devoted to prevention.

Key Conclusions from the Evaluation of the State Prevention Strategy

- There are a number of existing strengths to build on in order to develop a statewide prevention strategy. State agencies seem to be committed to prevention. Their informal collaborations have laid a foundation upon which to build more formal and expansive collaborations. Individual State agency theories on prevention share many important elements. There seems to be widespread encouragement of research-based programs.
- Agencies still need to arrive at a consensus on definitions of key terms such as prevention and research-based programs and on the degree to which they wish to require research-based programs.
- The prevention implementation plan timetable should be extended by the participating parties.
- The prevention committees should take measures to ensure and sustain the fullest participation and commitment of State agencies and other responsible parties.
- In the interest of creating an integrated comprehensive prevention plan and system, the scope of the prevention strategy should remain broad but manageable and should be coordinated with other existing prevention committees.

The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant effort began in 2001. GOCCP consolidated eight grants covering substance abuse and juvenile delinquency prevention, early intervention, and intervention, and community-based interventions for youths in the juvenile justice system into one grant. The purpose of this effort was to build local capacity to coordinate fragmented services and programs for children and youth into a research-based, data-driven continuum of care. Funding and oversight for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant are provided by the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice through GOCCP.

To apply for a Youth Strategies Consolidated Grants, Local Management Boards were mandated to collaborate with five local partners from various local child- and youth-serving public agencies. The mandated partners are: Prevention Coordinators, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, HotSpot Lead Coordinators, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Representatives, and Local Law Enforcement Representatives. These team members were expected to work together to plan for, support, and provide oversight for the local implementation of the grant.

Two major questions regarding the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant were initially addressed in CESAR's year-one evaluation:

1. What impact did the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant have on systems change at the local level? More specifically:

- *Were collaborations among agency partners strengthened?*
- *Were community stakeholders involved?*
- *Were agency partners thinking in terms of a coordinated continuum of youth services?*
- *Were services community-focused?*
- *Were services research-based?*
- *Was there adequate capacity to sustain change?*

2. What factors and activities encouraged and discouraged the systems change that occurred?

To begin to answer these questions, CESAR staff reviewed available documents, including the Guidance and Application Kit for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. CESAR staff interviewed the 24 Local Management Board (LMB) directors and 122 mandated partners of the local planning committees.² These interviews collected baseline information about roles, collaborations, and training for the period prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, Fiscal Year 2001. Interviewers also asked these respondents about their experiences and opinions regarding the planning stage in the latter half of 2001 that led to the writing of grant applications for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. The LMB directors were asked additional questions to examine their history and capacity for local coordination and collaboration.

Following are key findings from the first year of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant research, followed by conclusions based on these findings.

Key Findings from the Evaluation of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The consolidation of the eight grants was accomplished, giving planning teams the opportunity to strategically plan across domains and to create a continuum of prevention and intervention services regarding youth substance abuse, delinquency, and juvenile justice. The remaining findings are divided into three categories: 1) the role of the LMBs; 2) the structure and function of the planning committees; and 3) attitudes regarding the use of research-based programs.

The Role of the LMBs

- In the past, 83% of the LMBs conducted comprehensive needs assessments and developed strategic plans.
- In most cases, LMB directors were familiar with mandated partners and did not have to form new relationships for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.

² In the report, the term planning committee members refers to the LMB directors and mandated partners (Prevention Coordinators, Law Enforcement Representatives, Juvenile Justice Representatives, Safe and Drug Free School Coordinators, and HotSpots Lead Coordinators).

- Except for three counties that have considerably more staff, the LMBs had seven or fewer staff in FY 2001.

The Structure and Function of the Planning Committees

- All youth strategies planning committees conducted needs assessments.
- Virtually all youth strategies planning committees conducted resource assessments. Committee members described a resource assessment process in which partners were involved and a wide range of programs were examined. The assessments were usually done to identify gaps in services and to learn about target populations and existing effective programs. However, 62% of planning committee members also felt the refunding of programs was a key reason for conducting the resource assessment.
- Most youth strategies planning committees had full or nearly full agency partner participation.³ When a planning committee clearly lacked a partner, it tended to be either a HotSpot Coordinator or a Law Enforcement Representative. HotSpot Coordinators were also much more likely than other partners not to see a role for themselves on youth strategies planning committees in the future.
- Eighty-six to 89% of planning committee members felt the committees were at least fairly effective in selecting new programs to meet community needs, and were satisfied or very satisfied with the decision making process of the committees.
- The five most frequently mentioned benefits of the youth strategies planning process (n=132) were:
 - a broad representation of local public agencies in community planning (77%);
 - more research-based programs than before (69%);
 - greater local authority to integrate programs that affect the community (68%);
 - more money for programs (67%); and
 - a larger continuum of programs being funded than before (64%).
- The five most frequently mentioned barriers to the youth strategies planning process were:
 - not enough time to properly plan (70%) (3 months of planning time was given);
 - not enough community participation (48%);
 - not enough staff or financial resources to properly plan (47%);
 - limited expertise for designing research-based services (29%); and
 - limited expertise for designing so many new services (24%).
- Committee members received training in their own fields in FY 2001, but not much in areas outside of their fields of expertise.

³ Excluding five committees where data were ambiguous due to inconsistencies among partners.

Attitudes Regarding the Use of Research-based Programs

- Nearly two-thirds of the planning committee members felt the right amount of emphasis was placed on research-based programs, but almost 25% felt there was too much emphasis.
- Planning committee members saw benefits and disadvantages to research-based programs. The most commonly cited advantages were that:
 - research-based programs are proven, effective, or reliable programs with known outcomes (54%);
 - pre-designed models save time and energy from having to develop your own programs and, therefore, are convenient to use (32%); and
 - research-based programs are more justifiable and credible and might lead to more funding (24%).

The most commonly cited concerns about research-based programs were:

- suitability (43%);
- limitations to innovation (23%)
- expense (23%); and
- rigid implementation (19%).

Key Conclusions from the Evaluation of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

- Local Management Boards are a good choice for the role of lead entities in the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant initiative at the local level, since they have the authority and experience to do local planning, oversight, and coordination.
- HotSpot Coordinators and Law Enforcement Representatives should be persuaded to continue or begin their participation on youth strategies planning committees during the implementation phase of the grant.
- Community stakeholder input should be encouraged.
- Future planning efforts should give applicants more time to properly plan (the next cycle will have a 6-month planning process), should involve more community participation, should have more staff or financial resources, and should develop greater expertise for designing research-based services.
- Since Prevention Coordinators are important members of the planning committees, they should be encouraged to continue to provide input and guidance in spite of their initial dissatisfaction with the process.
- Further training would be useful in the following areas: the implementation of research-based programs, substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention, juvenile justice issues, outcome evaluations, program monitoring, and in how to ensure the long-term commitment of committee members.

- The LMB staff need more training in substance abuse prevention, since it is a relatively new program area for them.
 - HotSpot Coordinators need training in research-based programs, substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention, and juvenile justice.
 - The DJJ Representatives need training in areas other than juvenile justice.
 - All but the DJJ Representatives need training in juvenile justice issues.
 - All committee members would benefit from extra training in delinquency prevention.
- To save on training costs, GOCCP should continue scheduling and paying for training on research-based programs that is open to all interested communities.
 - Properly designed and implemented program evaluations should be done whenever affordable and practicable for the proven, promising, and innovative programs being implemented through the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.
 - Future meetings and trainings should highlight the success and lessons learned of planning committees in implementing their research-based programs.

Summary

CESAR has completed its first year evaluations of the State prevention strategy effort and the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. For its evaluation of the State prevention strategy, CESAR conducted baseline interviews with representatives of eight State agencies or agency units, reviewed supporting documentation, and observed all 20 State-level prevention meetings since July 2001. For its evaluation of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, CESAR staff interviewed the 24 LMB directors and 122 mandated partners of the local planning committees, and reviewed the Guidance and Application Kit.

The evaluation has documented substantial activity resulting from the State's prevention strategy effort. In the first year, State-level prevention committees formed by GOCCP and OCYF produced a prevention recommendations document, a prevention implementation plan, and have completed four activities from the implementation plan that will contribute to systems change. These activities are: 1) the creation and distribution of an inventory form to gather state agency information on prevention programs, funding, and training; 2) the statewide use of the DJJ substance abuse and mental health screening tool; 3) the creation of a Blueprints manual that identifies proven research-based prevention program models and strategies; and 4) the scheduling of regional training for local youth strategies grant partners.

The State has set up three prevention committees: the planning committee, the training and technical assistance committee, and the linkages committee. These committees reflect the three major goals of the implementation plan. These committees have been meeting since February 2002. Agency representation on the planning committees has steadily increased. Many child- and youth-serving State agencies serve on one or more of the committees. The committees are just beginning their accomplishments, and it is expected that they will continue to attain many

more systems change objectives in the years ahead. CESAR is documenting their progress toward the creation and implementation of this state prevention strategy.

Our evaluation found a strong need for a unifying theory or guidelines for prevention and for a consensus on definitions of prevention and research-based programs. Also, there is a need for more formal, and more frequent, agency collaborations and linkages, and increased coordination of prevention funding. In this context, the development of a statewide prevention strategy is a laudable goal to create a more integrated system.

The first-year evaluation documented substantial activity resulting from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. The Local Management Boards were a good choice as lead agencies, since they have the authority and experience to do local planning, oversight, and coordination. The planning committees, composed of five mandated partners and the LMB staff, appeared to have fulfilled the basic objectives of the grant application planning process by including mandated partners and assessing needs and program resources. This collaborative and data-driven process is considered essential for strategic planning for a local continuum of services for youth. Partners were generally satisfied with the process and with their perceived effectiveness at selecting programs to meet community needs.

The evaluation found that some areas should be addressed in future planning efforts, including giving more time to applicants and encouraging more community participation. In fact, committees will be given six months for their next cycle of planning. Also, it was clear that some planning committee members were not convinced of the merits of research-based programs, which were strongly encouraged in the grant's application kit. Partners' training tended to be limited to their own areas of expertise. To increase the capacity of the planning committees and to ensure future sustainment of the grant's goals, training in other areas of expertise, and in the implementation of research-based programs, would be very useful.

During the implementation stage of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant over the next four and half years, CESAR will continue to document the activities, perceptions, and collaborations of the committee members to determine success in meeting grant goals.

II. Introduction

A. Overview of Project

Maryland is promoting systems change to improve the way in which prevention and youth programs are strategically planned, funded, and delivered. Last year Maryland embarked upon two distinct but related efforts. The first was aimed at developing and implementing a statewide prevention strategy. The second, the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, combined multiple funding streams to empower communities to coordinate services and programs for children and youth into a research-based, data-driven continuum of care.

The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) contracted with the University of Maryland's Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) and the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice to evaluate both of these efforts. CESAR was tasked with evaluating systems change at the state and local levels. The University's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice was asked to conduct an outcome evaluation of programs supported by the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant and to produce a manual of effective, prevention-related, research-based programs.

This report is the first in a series in which CESAR will present findings from its evaluation of systems change at the state and local levels. Descriptive baseline data from FY 2001 and more current data from FY 2002 are the focus of this report.

We begin by describing the State prevention strategy and the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. Within each effort we will describe CESAR's first year evaluation activities, followed by key findings and conclusions.

B. The State Prevention Strategy

The State prevention strategy is overseen by the Maryland Partnership and the State Advisory Board for Juvenile Justice. An Executive Order signed by the Governor re-constituted the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice and established four standing committees. The Community Based Prevention, Early Intervention and Family Support committee was charged with overseeing the development of a prevention plan. Thus far, meetings have been convened for the purpose of having key State agencies develop and implement an interagency statewide prevention strategy. The overall vision for this statewide initiative is ensuring that children are healthy and safe in their families and communities. The strategy addresses sixteen areas of prevention, as measured by the target indicators of Maryland's Results for Child Well-Being.

Two questions were initially addressed by CESAR's year-one evaluation:

1. *Did the State produce a comprehensive, interagency, statewide strategic plan for prevention?*

2. Did the State implement that plan?

In order to begin to answer these questions, CESAR conducted baseline interviews with representatives of eight State agencies regarding the State system of prevention that existed in Fiscal Year 2001, prior to the initiation of the State prevention strategy. Supporting documentation was reviewed. In addition, CESAR observed all 20 State-level prevention meetings since July 2001 (Fiscal Year 2002) and documented the progress that was made toward crafting a State prevention strategy.

C. The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant effort began in 2001. GOCCP consolidated eight grants covering substance abuse and juvenile delinquency prevention, early intervention, and intervention, and community-based interventions for youths in the juvenile justice system into one grant. The purpose of this effort was to build local capacity to coordinate fragmented services and programs for children and youth into a research-based, data-driven continuum of care. Funding and oversight for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant are provided by the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice through GOCCP.

To apply for a Youth Strategies Consolidated Grants, Local Management Boards were mandated to collaborate with five local partners from various local child- and youth-serving public agencies. The mandated partners are: Prevention Coordinators, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, HotSpot Lead Coordinators, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Representatives, and Local Law Enforcement Representatives. These team members were expected to work together to plan for, support, and provide oversight for the local implementation of the grant.

The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant combines seven federal grants and one state grant. The grants that were consolidated and their sources of funding are:

- State Incentive Grant (SIG) – Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
- Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Grant/ Combating Underage Drinking – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- Maryland Afterschool Program Initiative – U.S. Department of Education (DOE)
- Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities-Governor’s Portion – DOE
- Title V – OJJDP
- Formula Grant - OJJDP
- Maryland Community Capacity Building – DJJ
- Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant – OJJDP.

Two major questions regarding the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant were initially addressed by CESAR’s year-one evaluation:

1. What impact did the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant have on systems change at the local level?

More specifically:

- *Were collaborations among agency partners strengthened?*
- *Were community stakeholders involved?*
- *Were agency partners thinking in terms of a coordinated continuum of youth services?*
- *Were services community-focused?*
- *Were services research-based?*
- *Was there adequate capacity to sustain change?*

2. What factors and activities encouraged and discouraged the systems change that occurred?

To begin to answer these questions, CESAR staff reviewed available documents, including the Guidance and Application Kit for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. CESAR staff interviewed the 24 Local Management Board (LMB) directors and 122 mandated partners of the local planning committees.⁴ These interviews collected baseline information about roles, collaborations, and training for the period prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, Fiscal Year 2001. Interviewers also asked these respondents about their experiences and opinions regarding the planning stage in the latter half of 2001 that led to the writing of grant applications for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. The LMB directors were asked additional questions to examine their history and capacity for local coordination and collaboration.

This report is organized as follows: Section III presents a brief summary of the methodology. Section IV reports on the baseline findings of the State prevention strategy. These findings are broken into two subsections – the State prevention meetings and the State agency interview baseline findings. Section V reports on the consolidation of the Youth Strategies Consolidation Grant and the baseline findings of the Local Management Boards and the planning committees.

⁴ In the report, the term planning committee members refers to the LMB directors and mandated partners (Prevention Coordinators, Law Enforcement Representatives, Juvenile Justice Representatives, Safe and Drug Free School Coordinators, and HotSpots Lead Coordinators).

III. Methodology

A. Sampling and Response Rates

There were two separate data collection efforts: for the State prevention strategy and for the local Youth Strategies Consolidation Grant.

1. The State prevention strategy

The target population for the State data collection effort was representatives of State agencies who were invited by the State to participate in a prevention workgroup. These representatives were considered to be the prevention authorities within their respective agencies.⁵

The sampling frame was a list of eight names and telephone numbers of the representatives from the State-level agencies or units of agencies.⁶

Since the goal of this data collection effort was to obtain interviews with everyone from the target population, no sampling procedures were employed. Instead, a complete sampling frame was used as a sample. A total of eight interviews were obtained, yielding a response rate of 100% for the State prevention strategy data collection effort.

2. The Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The target population for the local Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant initiative was the Local Management Board directors and coordinators/representatives, who had been mandated to be on youth strategies planning committees. A planning committee exists in every Maryland county and in Baltimore City and is supposed to include: (1) Local Management Board (LMB) directors; (2) local agency coordinators/representatives (Prevention Coordinators, HotSpot Lead Coordinators, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, DJJ Representatives, and Local Law Enforcement Representatives).

⁵ The prevention workgroup was a subcommittee whose main mission was to develop a State prevention plan. The workgroup eventually disbanded and was replaced by three implementation committees, but the representatives who were initially invited to participate in the workgroup were also invited to participate in the new committees. (The prevention workgroup is further explained in section IV-B.)

⁶ State agencies refer to State cabinet level agencies, units of these agencies, and Governor's offices. For the sake of brevity, the term agencies will be used in the report instead of agencies and agency units. The eight agencies were: (1) Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA), Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH); (2) Center of Health Promotion, Education, and Tobacco Use Prevention, DHMH; (3) Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA), DHMH; (4) Social Services Administration, Department of Human Resources (DHR); (5) Community Resource Development, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); (6) Safe and Drug Free Schools Program (SDFS), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE); (7) Combating Underage Drinking and Youth Strategies Grants Units, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP); and (8) Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy, Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF).

The sampling frame for the local Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant initiative data collection effort was compiled from various sources, such as state agencies or Web sites, and consisted of the names and contact information of the youth strategies planning committee members.⁷ Except when multiple HotSpot Lead Coordinators existed, one coordinator of each type was expected to be interviewed per planning committee. Since the exact number of the eligible respondents is unknown, the sampling frame is best described in terms of the 144 possible positions (6 planning committee members x 24 jurisdictions).

A total of 146 completed interviews were obtained, representing 131 out of 144 possible positions (Table 3.1). Thus, an overall response rate for the local youth data collection effort was 91%.

Table 3.1 Sample Disposition and Response Rates							
County*	LMB Director	Prevention Coordinator	Juvenile Justice	Hot Spots**	SDFS	Law Enforcement	Total
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6
13	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5
14	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	5
15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
23	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		5
24	✓	✓	✓	✓			4
Total (Response Rate)	24 (100%)	24 (100%)	23 (96%)	23 (96%)	23 (96%)	14 (58%)	131 (91%)
* Counties are not in alphabetical order. ** In six counties more than one HotSpots person was interviewed. Note: A total of 146 persons were interviewed. In cases where a mandated coordinator/representative did not attend the planning committee a representative from that agency was eligible to be interviewed for baseline questions about the agency.							

⁷ The list pertaining to the Local Law Enforcement Representatives was compiled during the data collection effort based on the information provided by the Local Management Board directors and other members of the planning committees.

B. Questionnaire Development and Data Collection

Three standardized interview instruments were developed: State Agency Survey (Appendix A), Coordinator Survey (Appendix B), and Local Management Board Director Survey (Appendix C). All three instruments were reviewed by the youth strategies unit director at GOCCP and her State Incentive Grant (SIG) manager prior to pretesting. The youth strategies director was a former LMB director and her SIG manager was a former Prevention Coordinator and active LMB committee member. The instruments were approved for use along with a consent form (Appendix D) by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Maryland. Participation in the interviews was voluntary; all respondents had to sign a consent form.

State prevention strategy interviews were conducted during two separate time periods: four in September 2001 – November 2001, and four in February 2002 – March 2002. Interviews with LMB directors began in October 2001 and ended in February 2002. Interviews with Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant coordinators/ representatives began in October 2001 and ended in March 2002.

All of the State prevention strategies interviews, all but one of the LMB director interviews, and approximately half of the coordinator/representative interviews were conducted in person; the rest were administered by telephone. When respondents were not available for interviews during scheduled area visits, telephone interviews were used instead. In rare instances, unfinished interviews were completed via e-mail.

The two local level instruments were pretested in the field during the first five counties' data collection and revised accordingly. The small number of State-level representatives made a formal pretest impractical.

The average interview length was 2.5 hours for the State survey and the LMB director survey and 1.25 hours for the coordinator survey. In addition to being asked open-ended and close-ended standardized questions, State interviewees and LMB directors were asked to provide supporting documentation, such as annual reports, evaluation reports, examples of training materials, program descriptions, and membership lists.

Two trained evaluation interview staff conducted all interviews. Training consisted of many ongoing discussions, a written protocol, supervised trial interviews, and an article on proper interviewing techniques. Throughout data collection, the senior interviewer checked and supervised the other interviewer's work to ensure data quality.

After data collection, forms were checked for completeness, data were double entered by trained data entry personnel using a pre-programmed SPSS data entry module, and data were checked for out-of-range errors and logical inconsistencies. Quantitative coding schemes were developed for the open-ended data and these data were entered into SPSS.

C. Attending State-Level Prevention Meetings

A final method of data collection consisted of observations of all 20 State-level prevention meetings since July 2001. Extensive notes were taken at these meetings. A form was used to capture this information in a standardized manner.

IV. Findings for the State Prevention Strategy

A. Overview

This chapter presents the current findings on the State prevention strategy. It describes what has been accomplished thus far through the State prevention meetings (Section B) and summarizes findings from interviews conducted with State agency prevention representatives (Section C). The prevention meetings are aimed at developing and implementing a statewide prevention strategy. The State interviews sought to capture information about prevention across State governmental agencies during the baseline period of Fiscal Year 2001.

B. Findings from State-Level Prevention Meetings

These findings are based on CESAR's observations of State-level prevention meetings and from a qualitative review of documents handed out at these meetings. The findings present a progress report and summary of accomplishments in year one toward producing and implementing a comprehensive, interagency, statewide strategic plan for prevention.

1. State agency representation on the prevention committees

Throughout the course of the State effort, five committees and subcommittees have been involved in the development of recommendations and an implementation plan for a State prevention strategy.

The first was the Community-based Prevention, Early Intervention, and Family Support Committee (CPEIFSC), chaired by the Special Secretary of the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF).⁸ This committee had representation from many State departments and units (human resources, health and mental hygiene, juvenile justice, drug abuse, education, criminal justice, children welfare, and the Lt. Governor's Office), as well as from advocates, universities, and Local Management Boards.

In August 2001, a Prevention Workgroup was established, as an ad hoc subcommittee to the CPEIFSC committee, to work more closely on prevention recommendations. Though it initially had representation from many of the State departments and entities that attended the CPEIFSC meetings, this participation was not sustained. Only GOCCP, the Lt. Governor's Office, ADAA, and DJJ attended more than half of the seven meetings before the workgroup was disbanded.

Finally, these two committees were replaced by three prevention implementation committees. Of these three prevention committees, the planning committee has been most successful in attracting and sustaining state agency representation. To date, it has had representation from

⁸ This committee was created in January 2001 to serve the State Advisory Board of Juvenile Justice and the Maryland Partnership on Children, Youth and Families, which the Lt. Governor chairs. The committee was created by Executive Order 01.01.2000 signed by the Governor re-constituting the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice and establishing four standing committees. One charge was to oversee the development of a prevention plan under the direction of the State Advisory Board.

GOCCP, the Lt. Governor's Office, OCYF, ADAA, MHA, DHR, DJJ, MSDE, and the Center of Health Promotion, Education, and Tobacco Use Prevention, as well as from advocates and universities. Added representation from the Maryland Highway Safety Office and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) began at the last meeting. A chronology of milestones is listed in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1.
Chronology of Milestones

- 7/11/01 – Community-based Prevention, Early Intervention, and Family Support Committee (CPEIFSC) has a working draft of recommendations
- 8/7/01 – First Prevention Workgroup meeting
- 11/2/01 – Prevention recommendations are developed with input from the Prevention Workgroup
- 12/7/01 – Final Prevention Workgroup meeting
- 12/12/01 – Recommendations for Improving Outcomes for School-Aged Children and Their Families are approved by oversight committees
- 1/15/02 – Final CPEIFSC meeting; 3 prevention committees are formed
- 2/15/02 – First Linkages Committee meeting
- 2/20/02 – First Planning Committee meeting
- 2/22/02 – First Training and TA Committee meeting

2. Recommendations for a statewide comprehensive prevention plan

A final recommendation document was produced that incorporated some prevention workgroup recommendations with those of the CPEIFSC committee. The recommendations were approved and finalized by the two oversight committees, the State Advisory Board of Juvenile Justice and the Maryland Partnership, in December 2001. The final document consists of a stated vision, target population, target indicators, guiding principles, and an action plan. A copy of the final recommendations, dated 1/03/02, is provided in Attachment E.

3. The implementation plan and the current work of the implementation committees

The prevention recommendation plan was used as a foundation for developing an implementation plan in January 2002. The implementation plan includes both State and local level prevention objectives and employs a broad scope of prevention. The plan was organized around three objectives and 13 intended outcomes, each having action items, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (Figure 4.2). There are 63 action items in all and multiple activities associated with each.

Figure 4.2
Objectives and Intended Outcomes of the State Prevention Implementation Plan

Objective 1: Foster State and Local Prevention Planning

- Maryland will have a comprehensive State prevention plan that is coordinated across state agencies
- Local jurisdictions will have a coordinated prevention plan

Objective 2: Improving Linkages: Coordinated Strategies and Programs

- All youth who enter the juvenile justice system will be screened to determine if further assessment, evaluation and treatment are needed for youth and families
- Children and families throughout the State will be connected to the appropriate services in their community/neighborhood
- Families of at-risk and delinquent youth will not experience barriers to participating in services
- Delinquent youth and youth in out-of-home placements are supported by the local school system, MSDE, DJJ, DHMH and DSS
- Enhance prevention activities being offered in the standard health curriculum used by middle schools and high schools

Objective 3: Create Mechanisms to Provide Technical Assistance and Training to Support Maryland's Prevention Delivery System

- Successful strategies/models are shared with all stakeholders
- Training and technical assistance services are effective
- Strategies are based on evidence-based practices and meet minimum standards
- Strategies will be evaluated as part of a continuous cycle of improvement
- Prevention programs will be implemented successfully and deliver effective services to ensure the prevention of risk behavior
- All State and federal funded prevention research will be coordinated to inform practitioners and provide practical applicable findings

Source: Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Family Support Committee Recommendations for Improving Outcomes for School-Age Children and their Families Implementation Plan, 2002.

Three workgroups were formed - a planning committee, a training and technical assistance committee, and a linkages committee - paralleling the three major objectives of the implementation plan. The three committees have been meeting since February 2002. The action items currently being worked on are:

- **Planning committee** – is developing a State resource and training inventory with the goal of coordinating State prevention funds and services, coordinating prevention training, and developing a State prevention plan; and is developing an inventory of RFPs to examine how best practices and stakeholder involvement are handled;
- **Training and technical assistance committee** – is examining current prevention-oriented professional training opportunities and certification procedures and is determining the most advantageous dissemination of the Blueprints manual;
- **Linkages committee** – is tracking the implementation of the DJJ intake substance abuse and mental health-screening tool throughout the State; is encouraging

efforts to enhance DJJ/MSDE linkages; and is recommending additional strategies, such as House Bill 959 which will enhance DHR/DJJ linkages.

To date, the following activities in the implementation plan have been completed: 1) the creation and distribution of an inventory form to be used by State agencies to gather information on prevention programs, funding, and training; 2) the scheduling of trainings by region for Youth Strategies Consolidation Grant partners; 3) the creation of a Blueprints manual that identifies proven research-based prevention program models and strategies; and 4) the statewide use of the DJJ substance abuse and mental health screening tool.⁹ While most implementation activities were scheduled to be accomplished in 2002, some were to be undertaken in 2003, and one is forecasted for 2004.

In recent developments, the Subcabinet suggested limiting the scope of the planning committee's data collection for its resource and training inventory to delinquency and substance abuse, rather than all of prevention. It is not clear if the scope of the data collection, or of the entire effort, will be limited. Early childhood programs were removed from the scope, since other committees are working in this area. In addition, 18 action steps were moved from the responsibility of the training committee to the planning committee. The implementation plan has not yet been revised to reflect this transfer. A copy of the implementation plan and the proposed outcomes to be transferred may be found in Attachment F.

Conclusions

We conclude that the recommendation and implementation plans developed thus far provide a useful framework of goals and activities from which to build a comprehensive statewide prevention strategy. A number of challenges will have to be met, however, in order create an effective and lasting statewide prevention strategy. We recommend that participating parties extend the timetable of the implementation plan.

The participation and commitment to the plan by all relevant State agencies and other responsible parties, such as the Local Management Boards, is critical to its success. Therefore, we recommend that all prevention committees take further measures to ensure and sustain the fullest participation and commitment of State agencies and other responsible parties.

Finally, it is recommended that the scope of the prevention effort be revisited. The recommendation and implementation plans were based on a broad scope. Sixteen target indicators are identified in the recommendation document, from births to adolescents, to academic performance, abuse or neglect, substance abuse, and juvenile arrests. Many of these targeted areas are interrelated and youth who receive services usually have a multitude of needs. In the interest of creating a comprehensive prevention plan and to support a prevention system that is not fragmented, the scope of the prevention plan should remain broad but manageable, and should be coordinated with other existing prevention committees.

⁹ Validation of the screening tool has been initiated, and will be used to revise and finalize the tool.

C. Findings from Interviews with State Agency Representatives

The following findings represent responses from interviews with eight State-level agencies regarding prevention in the baseline period of FY 2001.¹⁰

Respondents were read the following definition of prevention before beginning the interviews: “programs or strategies that address risk factors or increase resiliency factors that may prevent a child or youth from committing delinquent acts, using/abusing drugs or alcohol, dropping out of school.” This definition was more applicable to some agencies than others. The missions of the agencies that were interviewed ranged from serving all children (e.g., MSDE) to serving youth who have exhibited behaviors severe enough to bring them to the attention of the authorities (e.g., DJJ). Agencies with strong intervention roles had difficulty identifying prevention activities and tended to see their intervention activities as preventive.

“There has to be an agreement on what is prevention – once the child has committed a delinquent act or is absent 180 days from school, is the child beyond prevention? Then who is the target population? Everyone is at risk, not just those that match up on risk factors.” - State Agency Representative

1. State agency perspectives on prevention and the mechanisms used for communicating these perspectives

Our overall impression from these interviews is that agencies have a strong belief in the importance of prevention. However, there does not seem to be a unifying theory of prevention across the various State agencies. Agency representatives were asked to describe their theoretical framework toward prevention and to provide any supporting written materials. Their answers and documentation suggested the following prevention elements, and are reported in a descending order of frequency:

- research-based programming (5);
- a collaborative approach (5);
- meeting community needs and/or having community involvement (5);
- the importance of evaluations, measurable goals, and objectives (4);
- risk and protective factors (3);
- age appropriateness (3);
- universal, selective, and indicated programs (2);
- cultural relevancy (2); and
- professional standards (2).

Three agencies identified three distinct theoretical models: a community development or empowerment model, a public health model, and a youth development assets model. The most extensive documentation on prevention theory was submitted by ADAA. ADAA places strong

¹⁰ Agencies refer to cabinet level agencies, the Governor’s offices, and units of these agencies. See the methodology section for a full list of agencies and a description of the organizations represented in the survey.

emphasis on prevention training and also is the only agency with a dedicated prevention office and four regional prevention centers.

All of the agencies, except DJJ, said they provide some type of written guidance or use another form of communication to provide information about prevention to the public, agency staff, grantees, and to community-based organizations that provide services. The mechanisms used to communicate their messages and that were mentioned by two to five agencies, are:

- trainings, symposiums, conferences, and presentations (5);
- media campaigns (4);
- distribution of a federal agency's publications (3);
- technical assistance (3);
- Requests for Proposals or other documents relating to funding applications (2); and
- distribution of a non-profit's publications (2).

Methods of communication mentioned by a single agency are:

- state regulations regarding staff;
- a written prevention framework;
- operating standards;
- documents provided on a Web site;
- a survey document with a discussion of implications for prevention policy and planning; and
- pamphlets, brochures, etc.

With the exception of substance abuse and violence/delinquency prevention, the sources of research-based programs that agency representatives are aware of tend to reflect their individual professional disciplines.

Maryland agencies seem to encourage, rather than insist on, the implementation of proven research-based programs. Even though half of the agencies said they require research-based programs, few of the agencies could give an estimate of the percent of their funded programs that are research-based. Only one said that 100% of its programs are research-based. The documentation that agencies provided normally did not identify individual proven program models.

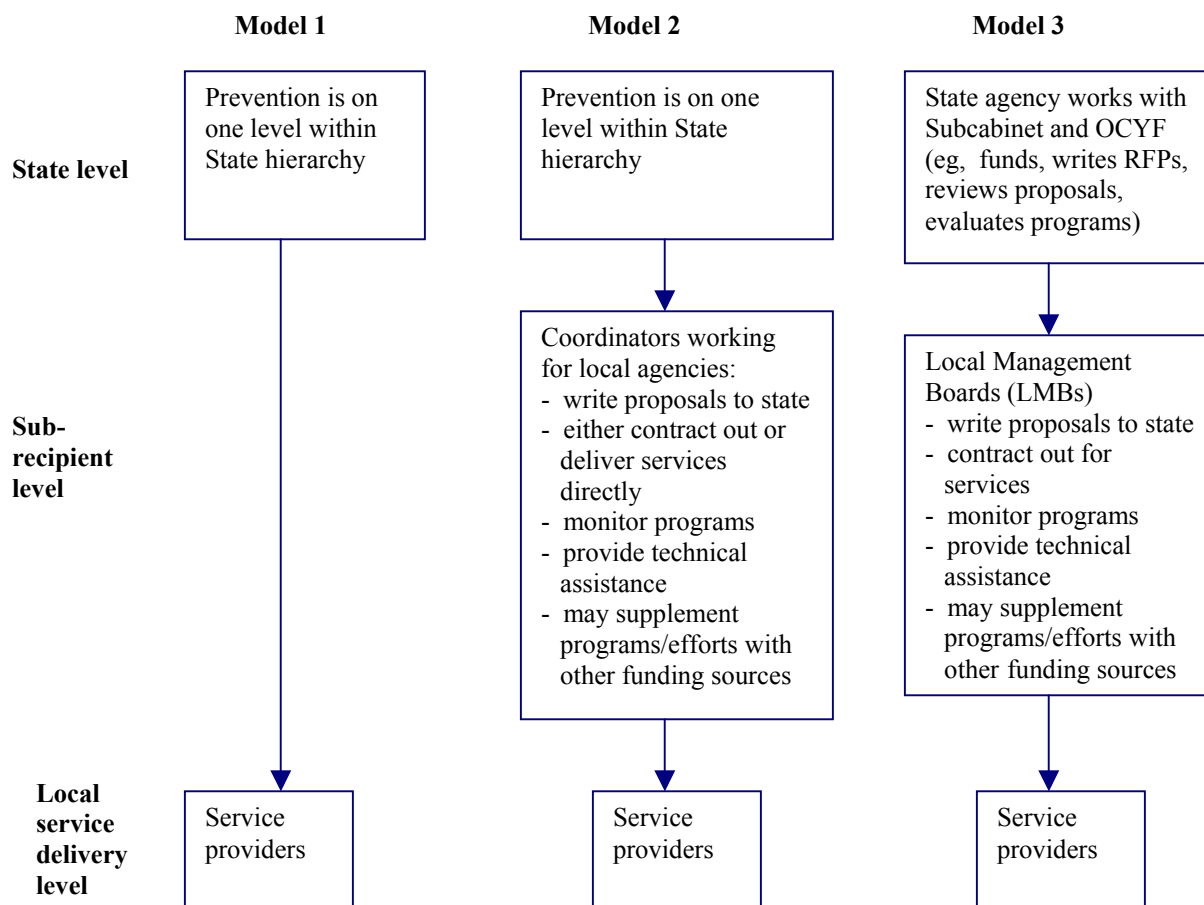
Agency definitions of what is meant by research-based programs seem to vary. For instance, some agencies believe that programs that apply the same principles of programs that have been proven effective are also research-based. Another viewpoint is that research-based program implementation means faithfully or rigidly (depending on one's viewpoint) replicating specific program models that were evaluated using rigorous methods and published in a peer-reviewed journal. Two agencies indicated their programs are research-based because their federal funder provided the model to be implemented, and they assumed it was properly evaluated as being effective.

State agencies' influence over research-based programs may be limited because they may delegate responsibility to local coalitions, partnerships, or staff, expecting them to enforce a research-based standard.

2. *The capacity and organizational structure of prevention within agencies*

The State agencies interviewed had relatively few staff devoted to prevention in FY 2001. In fact, it was difficult for some agencies to estimate their prevention staff, because so few staff have prevention as their sole responsibility. On average the agencies had 3.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff devoted to prevention (n=7).¹¹ Prevention staff ranged from a low of 0 (DJJ) to a high of 6 (GOCCP). This suggests a lack of State staff resources devoted to prevention activities. Over half of the agencies reported that all of their prevention staff had received some training in prevention (n=5). This was confirmed by details given about the type of training, dates of training, and the trainers.

Agencies were asked to describe the organizational structure of their “prevention system” from the top down, that is, from the State level to the service delivery level. Based on these descriptions three major models were distinguished. Several agencies fell within more than one model. The models are:



¹¹ A DHR representative wanted to count all of the local department caseworker staff as prevention staff, asserting they all do preventive work, but this seemed excessive and was not included in the analysis.

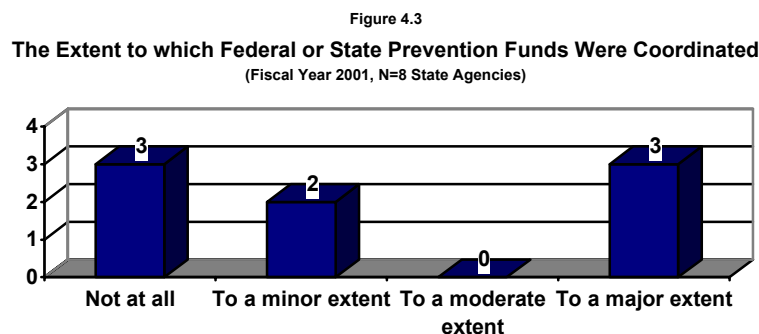
Model 1, cited above, contains two levels and is the simplest organizational structure for a State-local prevention system. It involves direct interactions between the State agency and service providers. Four examples of Model 1 were given by agency respondents. Model 2 adds an intermediate layer at a subrecipient level. The intermediate “coordinator” staff are employed by local public agencies. State agencies apply for federal funding then funnel funds down to local agencies through an application process. The underlying assumption is that local agencies are much closer to, and more knowledgeable of, local community needs. Local agencies act as fiscal agents, planners, collaborators, technical assistance providers, and may also provide their own direct services and conduct evaluations or monitor programs. Three examples of Model 2 systems were provided. The third model incorporates OCYF and the Subcabinet at the State level and uses Local Management Boards as the coordinators at the intermediate or subrecipient level. Six examples of Model 3 systems were provided.

3. Evaluation of risk and protective factors

State agencies do not evaluate the risk and protective factors of the individual participants of the programs they fund. Two agencies offered an explanation for why they do not conduct such evaluations, saying that their subrecipients conduct evaluations instead of the State. Indeed, this may be the case for other agencies as well. One agency remarked that good, reliable measurement instruments are needed.

4. Coordination, redirection, and leveraging of State prevention funds

The State Incentive Grant from CSAP recommends that states coordinate, redirect or leverage all State and federal substance abuse prevention funds. The agencies were asked about the extent to which they coordinated, redirected, or leveraged their State and federal prevention funds in FY 2001, during the baseline period. In the survey, coordination refers to “a systematic, comprehensive process of funding allocation undertaken by agency partners.” The graph below indicates the extent of reported funding coordination.



The practice of redirecting funding is rare, with seven of the eight agencies saying “not at all.” Redirection refers to “the shifting of funds from one or more targets to another.” Leveraging of funds, defined as the supplementation or increase of funds, for example by funding matches, was practiced by five agencies to a minor extent and by one agency to a major extent.

5. Collaborations among State agencies

A primary purpose of the State initiative is to foster collaborations among state agencies that have prevention programs and are expected to participate in the State-level prevention committees. The interviews with State agency representatives attempted to capture the notion of collaboration by first asking each agency if it had “any contacts or collaborations” with each of the other agencies in the area of prevention during the last fiscal year.

Agencies reported they had contacts or collaborations in about half of all potential collaborative pairings (52%).¹² Agencies with which other State agencies collaborate the most are SDFS/MSDE (86%) and ADAA (71%). At the low end are two agencies with which 28.6% of other agencies collaborated.

For the agencies that did collaborate, Figure 4.4 illustrates the average frequencies of their collaborative activities. The more informal collaborations (sharing information, receiving or giving technical assistance) are the most frequent activities, as one would expect, with average frequencies between more than twice, and frequently or ongoing. The next set of collaborative activities (conducting joint prevention planning, coordinating prevention legislation/policies across agencies, and coordinating prevention programming or service delivery) occurred on average once or twice, to more than twice in the six-month period. The collaborative activities that require the greatest commitment of institutional resources and the most formal interactions between agencies were the most infrequent. Designing or implementing an integrated service delivery model or jointly funding a staff position or a prevention project occurred less than once or twice in the sixth month period.

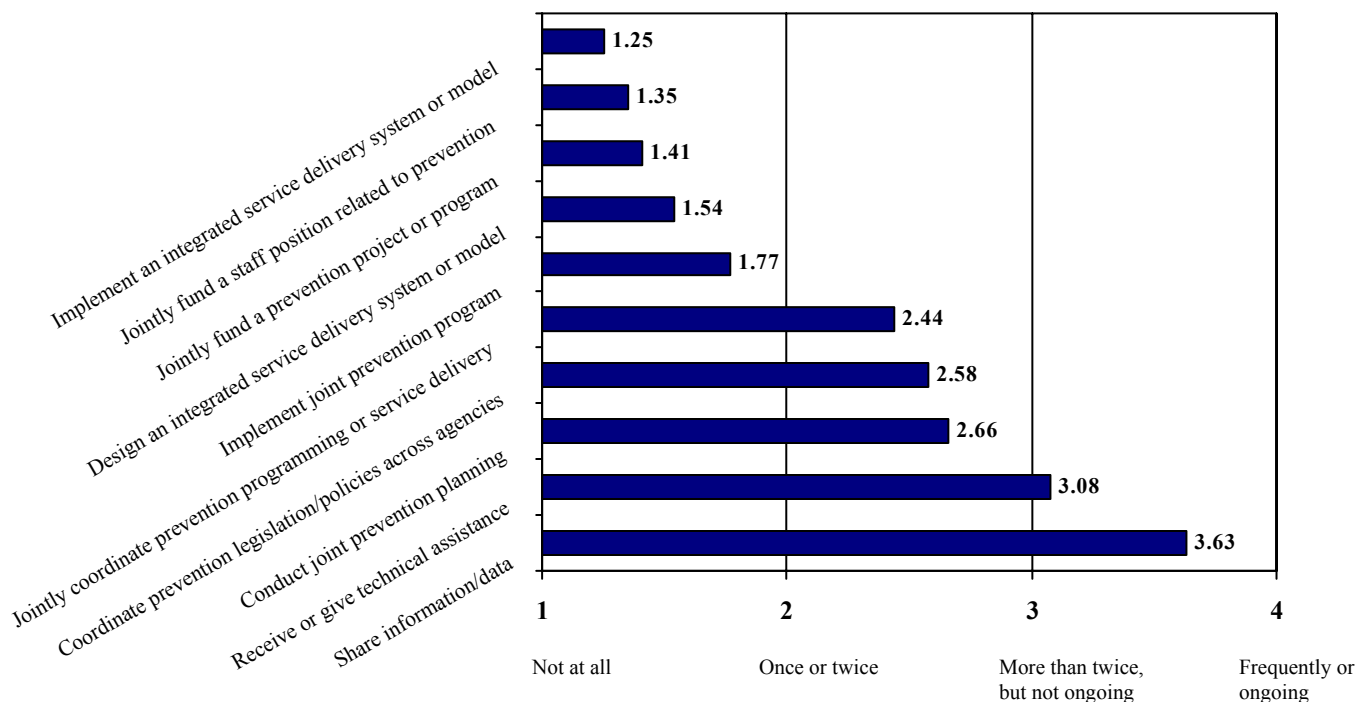
These findings are consistent with the literature. Konrad (1996) describes an integration continuum going from informal information sharing and communication, to cooperation and coordination, collaboration, consolidation, and finally integration. According to that continuum, the Maryland State agencies have gone as far as the collaboration stage but engage in these activities infrequently.

The agencies rarely have formal contracts, memorandums of agreement, or other official agreements for their prevention collaborative activities. Only three such agreements were referenced.

Before the current State initiative, no comprehensive statewide plan or strategy existed across different areas of prevention. Each agency was asked if it was aware of such a statewide plan, and in only two cases did agencies offer their own prevention strategies as examples.

¹² There were 56 possible collaborations between pairs of agencies (i.e., between 8 agencies and 7 potential partners each) and in 29 cases, the answer was affirmative.

Figure 4.4
Average Frequency of Collaboration by Collaboration Type
(January - June 2001, n=8 State agencies)



6. *Barriers to prevention programming*

Agency representatives were asked for their personal views of what the barriers to prevention are that should be addressed in the future. In descending order of frequency, the following barriers were mentioned:

- there is insufficient funding for prevention (4);
- the definition of prevention is a barrier (2);
- it is important to make sure that one area of prevention, one mandate, does not get lost when other areas of prevention are merged or generalized together (2);
- there are restrictions on how federal funding can be spent (1);
- more prevention resources (other than money) are needed (1);
- better access is needed (1);
- prevention is difficult to evaluate (1);
- all agencies that should be involved, should be included (1);
- GOCCP and OCYF should work more closely together to develop a prevention agenda (1);
- State agency staff and local staff need a better education in effective prevention strategies and logic models (1); and
- locals forget to look at needs and go right to programs (1).

D. Conclusions

Our evaluation found a strong need for a unifying theory or guidelines for prevention, and for a consensus on definitions of prevention and research-based programs. Also, there was a need for more formal and frequent agency collaborations and linkages and increased coordination of prevention funding. In this context, the development of a statewide prevention strategy is a laudable goal to create a more integrated system.

There are a number of obvious strengths for the development of a statewide prevention system. State agencies seem to be committed to prevention. Their informal collaborations have laid a foundation upon which to build more formal and expansive collaborations. Individual State agency theories on prevention share many important elements. Finally, there seems to be widespread encouragement of research-based programs.

If the State wishes to create an integrated statewide prevention system it will inevitably face certain challenges. Prevention staff resources at the State level are very limited. There is no State prevention office or entity. All indications are that prevention program funds also may be very limited. Agencies will need to arrive at a consensus on the meaning of prevention and of research-based programs, and on the degree to which they wish to require such programs. Federal restrictions on how prevention funding can be spent might present an enormous barrier to programmatic and fiscal coordination. Finally, State agencies will have to be convinced that their interests and mandated missions will not get lost among competing interests.

“No one wants to admit to the fiscal barriers. The assumption is that State agencies can pool their funds. Most of our funding is federal and there are restrictions. Also there’s an assumption that there are lots of federal dollars for prevention. This is not the case.” – State Agency Representative

References

Konrad, E. 1996. A Multidimensional Framework for Conceptualizing Human Services Integration Initiatives. In J. M. Marquart & E. L. Konrad (eds.), *Evaluating Initiatives to Integrate Human Services*, 69, pp. 5-19, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

V. Findings for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

A. Overview

This section presents the year-one evaluation findings on the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.

Section B reviews the consolidation of the grant and assesses the guidance given to applicants. Findings are based on a review of the Youth Strategies Guidance and Application Kit to grantees, conversations with the youth strategies unit manager, and her presentations at the pre-application training.

Section C describes the Local Management Board's role as the lead organization in the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant initiative and assesses the boards' capacity to fulfill that role. It is primarily a summary of interview findings with 24 Local Management Board directors and a review of supporting documentation.

Section D describes the local planning committees. Specifically, it describes those involved in the planning process, their former collaborations, the processes the planning committee used, committee members' satisfaction with the process, their attitudes regarding research-based programs, and their outlook on their future participation.

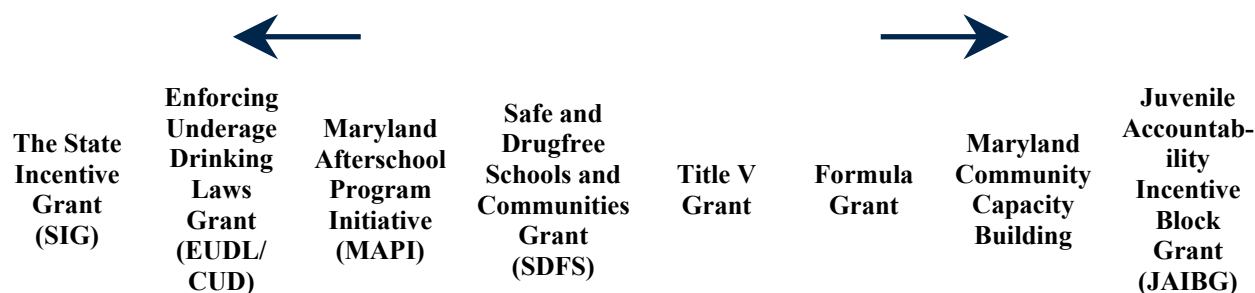
B. Findings on the Consolidation of the Youth Strategies Grant

The first step in the local initiative was achieved through the consolidation of the eight grants (listed in the introduction). These grants came from various federal sources – CSAP, OJJDP, DOE, and from DJJ State funds. The GOCCP youth strategies unit manager reported that federal grant officers did not object to the consolidation of their grants on the condition that their individual grant parameters would be retained.

The grants within the consolidated grant provide a continuum of services from substance abuse and delinquency prevention to juvenile justice aftercare (Figure 5.1). The majority of these grants are prevention oriented (SIG to Title V). The Formula Grant combines prevention, intervention, and juvenile justice improvements. The Maryland Community Capacity Building Grant is geared to adolescents who are diverted from detention, on probation, and are eligible for aftercare or informal supervision. The Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) grant deals strictly with the juvenile justice system.

Figure 5.1

Continuum of Services



The Youth Strategies Guidance and Application Kit developed by GOCCP, in partnership with the State Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice and the Department of Juvenile Justice, was very thorough and contained clear descriptions of the scope and objectives of the grant, collaborative responsibilities, available funding, and instructions (Figure 5.2).

Excerpt from Guidance and Application Kit

Figure 5.2

This Consolidated Grant provides an opportunity for local jurisdictions, through their Local Management Boards, Prevention Coordinators, Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, Local Department of Juvenile Justice Representatives, Local Law Enforcement and Hot Spots Lead Coordinator(s) to jointly work with key stakeholders to assess community needs, develop a strategic plan and identify specific research-based proven or promising strategies to:

- Prevent adolescent substance abuse,
- Prevent juvenile delinquency,
- Reduce adolescent substance abuse,
- Reduce juvenile delinquency,
- Provide early intervention programs,
- Provide delinquency intervention programs and/or
- Create, expand or enhance community-based programs and *aftercare* for youth in the juvenile justice system

Local jurisdictions are encouraged to develop system-wide coordinated services along the continuum of need. The primary intent of this systemic approach is to create a seamless continuum of youth services and programs within a community. This "continuum of care" begins by providing research-based prevention services for all youth and ensuring targeted programs for youth at greatest risk; such strategies should be directly linked to statistically demonstrated community needs both at a jurisdictional level and, where possible, at a neighborhood level. In order to truly ameliorate the risks that lead to poor outcomes for children services need to be available in the neighborhoods in which they reside. Additionally, special attention should be given to the issue of the over-representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, with strategies that are sensitive to the culturally diverse needs of youth in the community.

Source: Guidance and Application Kit, 2001, p. 3

There was no requirement in the application kit for applicants to implement research-based programs with youth strategies funds, but rather they were “strongly encouraged” to do so. Research-based programs were then broadly defined as either “promising” or “proven” programs. While proven programs were those evaluated as effective in research studies, promising programs were defined as programs that “may *not* have been evaluated using rigorous scientific methods but are based on *recognized effective principles*.”

Applicants were given the responsibility of discovering the available and applicable proven programs and effective principles. The Maryland Blueprints, a document of approved research-based programs in the State, was not available at the time. The application kit offered some help by giving applicants resources (Web sites, reports) to search on their own for research-based programs and strategies from CSAP, OJJDP, and from other sources. Further help was offered to applicants at a technical assistance conference held by GOCCP in early October, less than a month before the applications were due. However, only half of the interview respondents (LMB directors and coordinators) found this to be helpful or very helpful in selecting research-based programs or activities.

In summary, the consolidation of the eight grants was accomplished, giving planning teams the opportunity to strategically plan across domains and to create a continuum of prevention and intervention services regarding youth substance abuse, delinquency, and juvenile justice. There are several systems change advantages to a consolidated grant. By consolidating the eight grants into one, program funding becomes less categorical. It enables local planning committees to strategically plan across multiple domains rather than being bound by discrete, narrowly defined areas of need. The GOCCP youth strategies unit manager often stressed in presentations that the consolidation of funding would create a “continuum of care.” Another advantage is the streamlining of the application process. Instead of applying for eight individual grants, each with its own application requirements, the LMBs were able to apply for one grant giving them a potential savings in administrative expenses, time, and staff effort.

C. Findings from Interviews with Local Management Board Directors

The LMBs are assumed to have the organizational resources, structure, authority, and experience to lead and oversee the youth strategies effort at the local level. The role of the LMBs in the Youth Strategies Consolidation Grant is consistent with their role in other grants. According to the Youth Strategies Guidance and Application Kit, the LMBs are to:

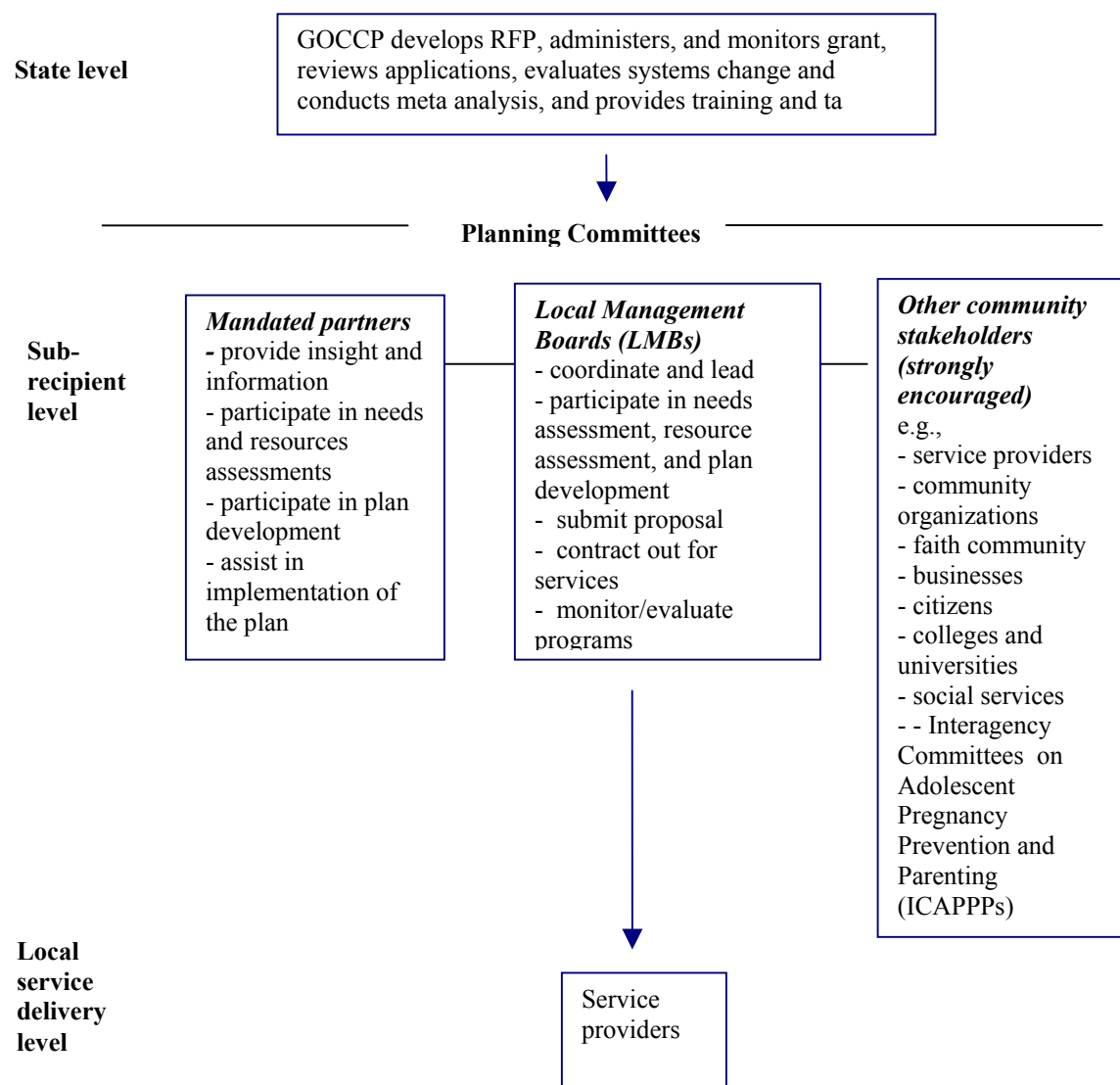
- coordinate and lead the planning process;
- ensure community involvement;
- develop a results-based, research-based, data-driven plan with its local partners;
- submit the plan on behalf of the jurisdiction;
- monitor the implementation and execution of the plan; and
- evaluate the impact of the plan on the targeted indicators.

A model of the roles and relationships among major participants in the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant illustrates that the LMBs are the linchpin in this web of relationships,

reporting to the State, organizing and coordinating with mandated partners and other community stakeholders, and contracting with and monitoring the work of service providers (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3

Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant



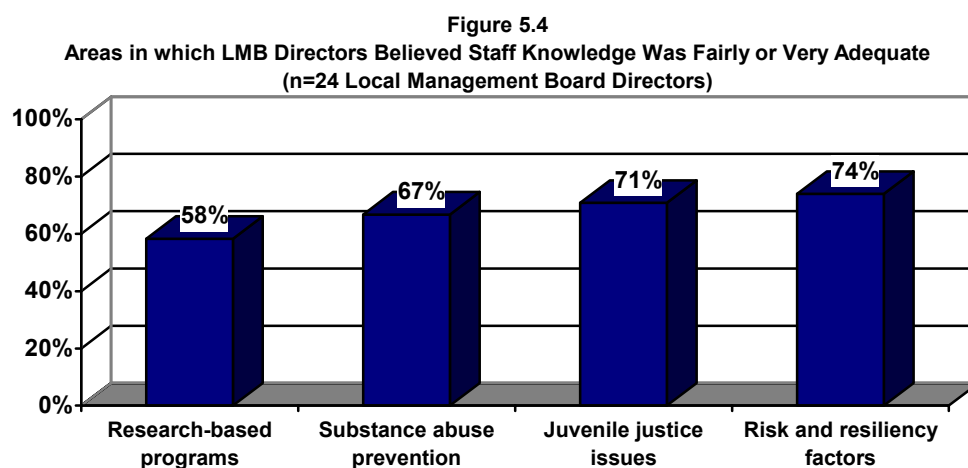
1. Organization and resources of the LMBs

The LMBs were designed as coordinating bodies for local child serving public agencies. As such, each board is composed of six core ex officio board members: a senior representative from local government and the head of or a designee from the local department of health, juvenile justice, mental health or core service agency, social services, and the school system. Other board members vary per LMB but often include representatives from community-based organizations, other local public agencies, nonprofits, service providers, the faith-based community, businesses, and citizens.

Some youth strategies partners are board members. The Juvenile Justice Representative is a required member. Other youth strategies partners, e.g. SDFS Coordinators and Prevention Coordinators, may be indirectly represented on the board through their department heads. In a few cases, high-ranking local Law Enforcement Representatives who joined the youth strategies planning committees were also on their boards.

In FY 2001, 58% of the LMBs had four or fewer FTE staff persons, including the directors (n=24). Except for three counties that had considerably more staff, the LMBs had seven or fewer staff. Typically, the LMB staff consists of a director, one support staff person, a fiscal or grants administrator, and a program monitor/evaluator. According to FY 2001 LMB annual reports, the LMBs had an average of 15 programs (n=24).

When asked to rate the adequacy of the staff's understanding in youth strategies areas, the LMB directors believed their staff's knowledge was fairly adequate or very adequate in: research-based programs (58%), substance abuse prevention (67%), juvenile justice issues (71%), and risk and resiliency factors (74%) (n=24).



2. Relations with mandated partners prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The LMB directors were asked if their boards collaborated “in any way” with each of the mandated partners prior to the youth strategies initiative in Fiscal Year 2001 (n=24). All of the LMBs collaborated with the Juvenile Justice Representatives since they were represented on the boards. In addition, 92% reported they collaborated with the Safe and Drug Free Schools

Coordinators; roughly three-quarters with the Prevention Coordinators and the Local Law Enforcement Representatives, and 71% with the HotSpots Lead Coordinators. So, in most cases, the LMB directors were familiar with most of these partners and did not have to form new relationships for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.

3. The LMBs' experience in needs assessments and strategic planning

The LMBs have extensive experience in conducting comprehensive needs assessments and developing strategic plans. Eighty-three percent of the LMBs had done these activities prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant (n=24). The average number of smaller needs assessments that LMBs conducted in FY2001 was 4. These limited needs assessments are normally done to apply for specific grants. These limited needs assessments (46%, n=24), and strategic plans (63%, n=20), were done on the county level rather than on the community level because local data tends to be somewhat difficult to access.

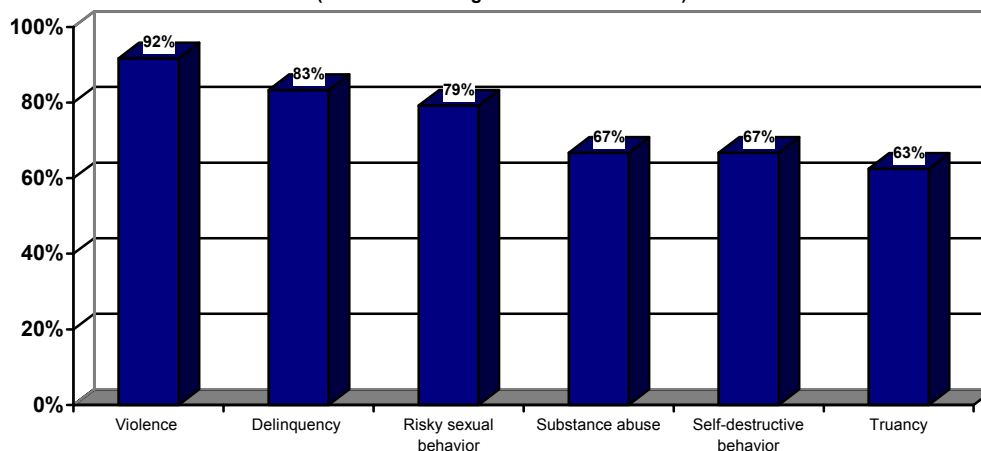
4. The LMBs' experience in the substantive areas of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

Prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, 79% of the LMBs were targeting juvenile non-violent offense arrests and 71% were targeting juvenile violent arrest rates (n=24). In contrast, half were targeting substance abuse.

Some LMBs had experience in anti-delinquency planning and coordination because they had already been developing anti-delinquency strategies prior to the consolidated grant. For instance, Baltimore City, Wicomico County, Montgomery County, and Washington County completed a Comprehensive Strategy, and Frederick and Caroline Counties had a juvenile delinquency prevention policy board/LMB subcommittee that had developed a juvenile delinquency prevention plan. Fortunately for them, these committees were available and ready to become the youth strategies planning committee.

The LMBs have more experience with front-end prevention programs than with substance abuse or delinquency intervention programs, or juvenile justice after-care programs. Every LMB supported at least one prevention program in FY 2001 (n=24). Virtually all funded an early intervention program (96%). Eighty-eight percent supported an intervention program, while only 38% funded aftercare programs for youth in the juvenile justice system. The most common prevention programs addressed violence prevention, delinquency prevention, and the prevention of risky sexual behavior; less frequent prevention programs were aimed at substance abuse prevention, prevention of self-destructive behavior, and truancy (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5
Types of LMB Supported Prevention Programs
(n=24 Local Management Board Directors)



5. The LMBs' experience in research-based programs

Eighty-three percent of the LMB directors said they adopted at least one research-based proven program in the last fiscal year¹³ (n=24). However, a few LMBs readily admitted that their programs use research principles or an adjusted model, rather than adhering to a prescribed program model. On average, the 16 LMB directors who answered this question named 3.8 programs as being research-based.

When asked to name the programs that were research-based, the examples given were quite varied, and many were mentioned only once or twice. Those mentioned at least five times were: Healthy Families, Family Preservation, and after school programs (no specific model was named). Healthy Families provides home visiting services to parents with children from birth to an early age. Family Preservation programs are targeted at families with a child at risk of out-of-home placement, to provide services to the family to avoid such a placement.

6. Conclusion

The LMBs are good choices for the role of lead entities in the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant initiative at the local level since they have the authority and experience to do local planning, oversight, and coordination. Their mission has been to create effective interagency local children and family service delivery systems. They have the recognition and support of State and local county governments. High-level local agency officials sit on their boards. And, they have worked with many of the mandated youth strategies partners in the past.

Of course, the LMBs also vary on a number of important issues, such as size, resources, longevity, focus, and presumably in the success of achieving their objectives. Some LMBs were obviously better poised and ready to take on the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant than others. For instance, some had a delinquency prevention plan and committee already in place, while others did not.

¹³ The LMB directors were read the definition of proven research-based programs from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant Guidance and Application Kit for this question.

The LMB staff would benefit by training in some of the substantive areas covered by the grant, such as research-based programs, substance abuse prevention, and juvenile justice issues.

In order to effectively plan and deliver services within counties, the LMBs would greatly benefit from more sub-jurisdictional data. OCYF is currently working on the development of a geo-mapped automated data system that would be available to the LMBs. This would include local data on low birth weights, teen births, prenatal care, TANF recipients, child abuse and neglect reports, and DJJ intake data on violent and nonviolent arrest rates. The DJJ data would be especially useful for youth strategies.

D. Findings from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant Planning Committees

In addition, local data on risk and resiliency factors would be useful to plan and evaluate prevention programs. The Maryland Adolescent Survey (MAS) includes some risk and resiliency factors. However, MAS data are only published at the State level approximately every two years and, according to MSDE, are valid only as far down as the county level, not to the neighborhood or community level.

These findings are based on 146 interviews. (For information on data limitations, refer to Appendix G.) Interviewees had a median of 3.5 years in their current position. Local collaboration indexes developed for these findings can be used in future analyses to compare collaborations among youth strategies partners over time.

1. Composition of planning committees

Specific local coordinators and local agency representatives having expertise and experience in the substantive areas covered by the consolidated grant were supposed to work with the LMBs on the grant application. These mandated partners are:

- **Prevention Coordinators** who manage substance abuse prevention programs for local health departments and whose major source of funding is from the federal substance abuse block grant administered by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA), Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene;
- **Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators** who manage substance abuse and violence prevention programs for the school systems, and whose major source of funding comes from the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools program, administered through the Maryland State Department of Education;
- **HotSpot Lead Coordinators** who coordinate local community development, youth prevention, etc., initiatives in high crime areas;
- **Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) representatives** who hold high-level positions in local DJJ offices and are core members of the local management boards, and
- **Local Law Enforcement Representatives** chosen by the Local Management Boards.

Figure 5.6 shows the participants of the planning committees by member types, based on interviews with planning committee members. There are a total of 24 planning committees, one

for each county in Maryland and for Baltimore City. On eight occasions planning committee members within a county significantly disagreed on the presence of a member in the committee; these members were coded as undetermined.

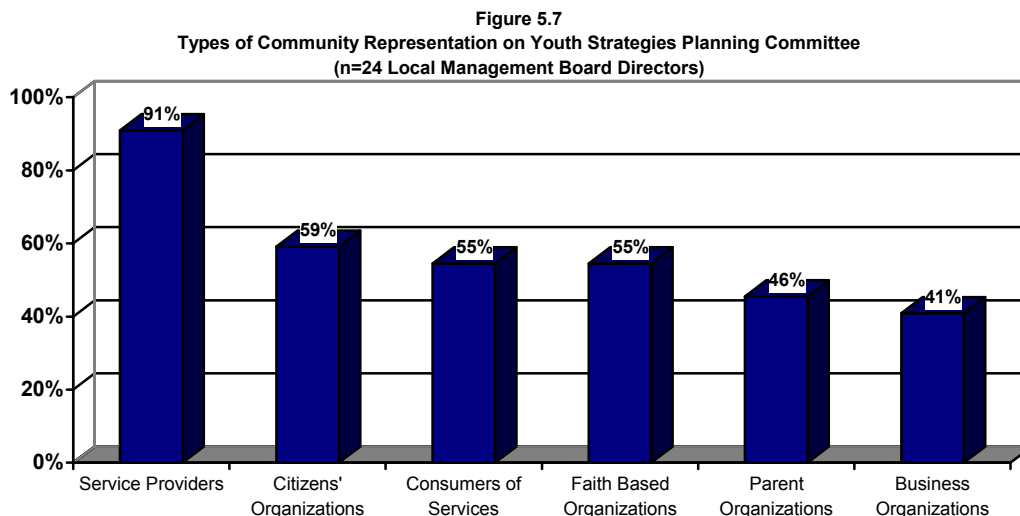
In summary, according to the interview responses, 12 counties had a full complement of 6 mandated planning committee members. Seven additional counties had four or five members. The remaining 5 counties could not be determined.

Figure 5.6 Participants in the Planning Committees <i>(n=144 possible planning committee positions)</i>				
Member Type	Participated in Committee	Did not participate in Committee	Undetermined	Total
LMB Director or Staff	24	0	0	24
Prevention Coordinator	24	0	0	24
Juvenile Justice Representative	23	0	1	24
Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinator	20	1***	3	24
HotSpot Coordinator(s)	19*	4	1	24
Law Enforcement Representative(s)	17**	4	3	24
Total	127	9	8	144
* includes two instances in which someone other than a lead coordinator was sent to represent HotSpots ** includes three instances in which the HotSpot Coordinator doubled as the Law Enforcement Representative *** received a planning grant for six months to engage in a longer planning process before an application for implementation funds				

2. Community stakeholder involvement

The LMB directors were asked to what extent community-based organizations or community leaders participated in the planning committee. Most (73%) thought the community was involved to at least a moderate extent (n=22).

LMB directors also reported on the types of community representation on the planning committees (Figure 5.7). Service providers were well represented; 91% of the LMB directors reported service providers to be at planning committee meetings. Representation from the rest of the community was more sporadic with the least representation from business organizations (41%) and parent organizations (46%).



Forty-eight percent of planning committee members believed a lack of community participation was a barrier to the planning process (n=132)(see *Satisfaction with the Planning Committees*).

3. Collaborations among planning committee members prior to the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

The results presented in this section are based on the data from the 116 interviews conducted with the eligible youth strategies mandated partners.¹⁴ Figures 5.8 through 5.10¹⁵ show summary statistics for the measures of collaboration by the type of mandated partners for Fiscal Year 2001.¹⁶

Law Enforcement Representatives ranked the highest (55%, n=13), and Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators ranked the lowest (37%, n=21), in terms of self-reported collaborations with other planning committee members.¹⁷ Self-reported overall collaboration between the other mandated partners differed only slightly (43% Prevention Coordinators, 42% DJJ Representatives, 39% HotSpot Coordinators)(n=82). Collaboration reported by other mandated

¹⁴ Thirty out of 146 overall completed interviews contained no data on collaborations between the planning committee members. Twenty-four out of these 30 were the Local Management Board directors (who were not asked about the collaborations with the mandated partners); the remaining six were mandated partners interviewed as proxy respondents, i.e., instead of the target respondents, for the previous fiscal year (who had no knowledge about collaborations with the planning committee members).

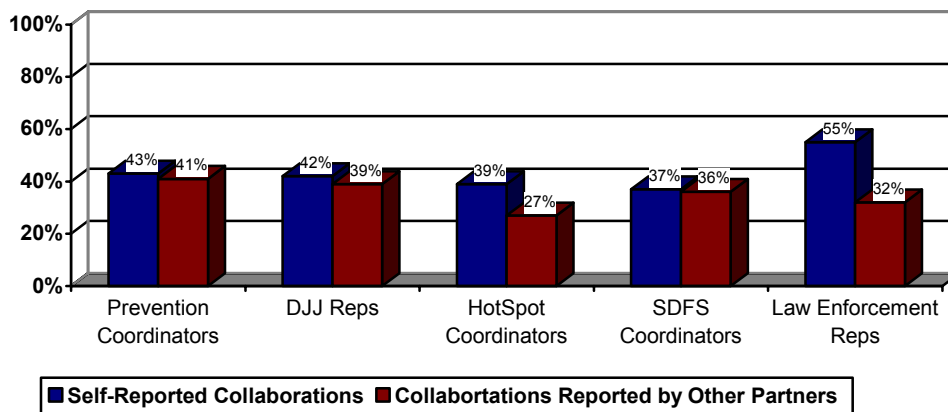
¹⁵ n=23 Prevention Coordinators, 22 DJJ Representatives, 37 HotSpot Coordinators, 21 SDFS Coordinators, and 13 Law Enforcement Representatives.

¹⁶ To ensure the comparability across measures of collaboration, the overall collaboration index, the formal collaboration index, the informal collaboration index, and the individual partner collaboration indices described above were standardized as the percentages of the maximal possible index scores. Thus, a score of 0 on the standardized indices represents no collaboration; a score of 100 represents maximal possible collaboration. See Appendix H for a description of the measurement of collaboration and computation of summary indices.

¹⁷ Self-reported collaborations are the average collaborations with all the other planning committee members reported by any particular type of mandated partner. For example, self-reported collaborations of Prevention Coordinators are the average collaborations with the Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, HotSpot Coordinators, Juvenile Justice Representatives, Local Management Board Directors, and Law Enforcement Representatives as reported by the Prevention Coordinators.

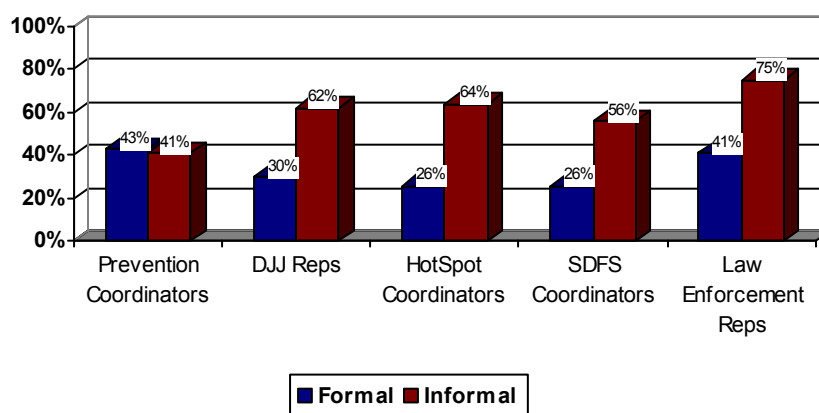
partners¹⁸ ranged from 27% for HotSpot Coordinators to 41% for Prevention Coordinators. While there were some large discrepancies between the self-reported collaborations vs. collaborations reported by others for the Law Enforcement Representatives (55% vs. 32%), and HotSpot Coordinators (39% vs. 27%), these discrepancies were not statistically significant.

Figure 5.8
Overall Collaborations



Informal types of collaboration were more pronounced than formal types of collaboration for all of the mandated partners (Figure 5.9). Law Enforcement Representatives ranked the highest with respect to both formal and informal types of collaboration (75% and 41%). Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators ranked the lowest with respect to formal aspects of collaboration (52%) and one of the lowest with respect to informal aspects of collaboration (26%). The differences between the lowest and highest ranks were statistically significant for both formal and informal types of collaboration.

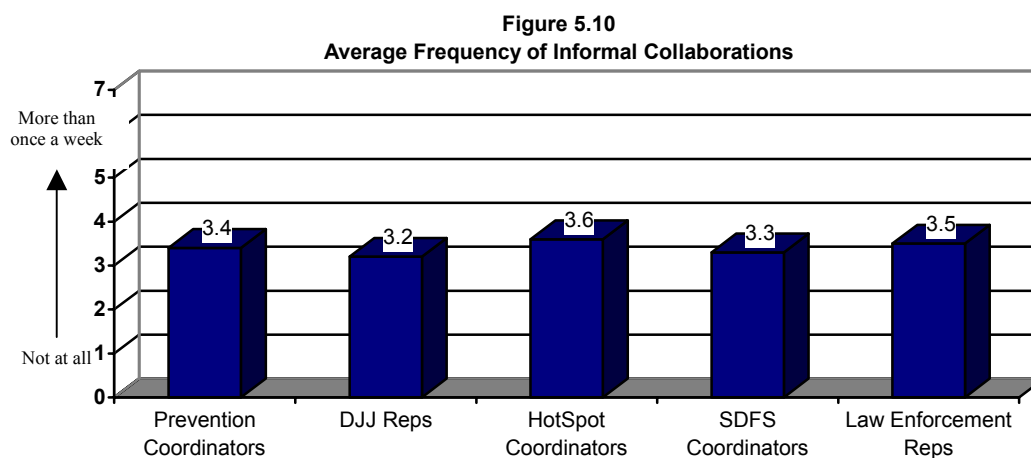
Figure 5.9
Formal vs. Informal Collaborations



All mandated partners reported collaborating informally (Figure 5.10). There were only very slight differences between the mandated partners in terms of the frequency of informal aspects of collaboration. HotSpot Coordinators reported an average frequency between quarterly and

¹⁸ Collaborations reported by others are the average collaborations with a particular mandated partner reported by all the other mandated partners. For example, collaborations of Prevention Coordinators reported by others are the average collaborations with the Prevention Coordinators as reported by the Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, HotSpots Coordinators, Juvenile Justice Representatives, Local Management Board directors, and Law Enforcement Representatives.

monthly. Law Enforcement Representatives reported frequencies closer to monthly, and the rest of the partners reported frequencies of collaboration closer to quarterly.



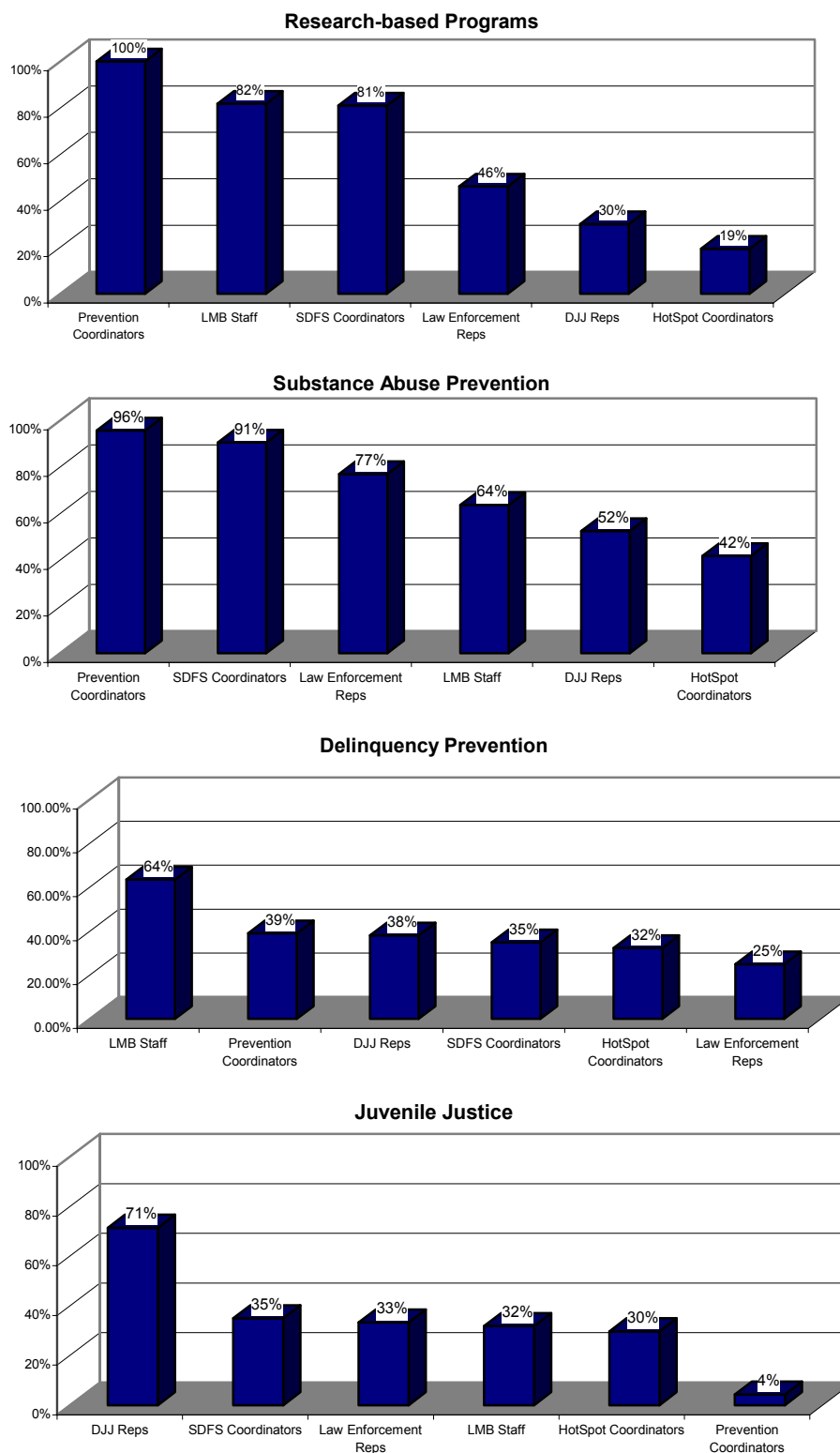
There were large but non-systematic differences between the 24 jurisdictions in terms of the reported collaborations. The only significant predictor of variation in the overall standardized collaborations measure was years of experience of mandated partners. Partners with more years of experience in the current position consistently reported higher overall levels of collaboration.

4. Training of planning committee members

Planning Committee members were asked about the formal training they had received in the past fiscal year (FY 2001) in various fields. They appeared to have received training in their own fields, but not much in areas outside of their areas of expertise (Figure 5.11¹⁹). In research-based programs and substance abuse prevention, most of the Prevention Coordinators and SDFS Coordinators received training last year, while fewer of the HotSpot Coordinators and DJJ Representatives had recent training in these two areas. In the area of delinquency prevention, the LMB staff reported getting the most training (64%). Fewer than 40% of the other planning committee member types had received any formal training in delinquency prevention in the past fiscal year. In the area of juvenile justice, 71% of the DJJ Representatives attended a training relevant to juvenile justice in the last fiscal year. Very few of the other planning committee members received any training in juvenile justice last year, particularly the Prevention Coordinators (4%).

¹⁹ N=23 Prevention Coordinators, 22 DJJ Representatives, 36-37 HotSpot Coordinators, 21 SDFS Coordinators, and 12-13 Law Enforcement Representatives.

Figure 5.11
Training of Planning Committee Members in Issues Relevant to the Youth Strategies
Consolidated Grant (Fiscal Year 2001):



Pre-applicant training left some gaps, especially in research-based programs and outcome evaluation. Planning Committee members who attended the three day pre-applicant training in October 2001 were asked about how helpful it was to them in three areas: accessing the needed information, selecting research -based programs, and developing a plan for evaluating outcomes. The area in which the training seemed to be most helpful was in accessing the needed information, with 66% of respondents rating it as helpful or very helpful (n=58). As far as selecting research-based programs, half of the planning committee members (51%) found the training to be helpful or very helpful (n=57). Finally, the area which planning committee members found the most problematic was training in developing a plan for evaluating outcomes. Forty-one percent of the planning committee members in attendance found the training to be helpful or very helpful (n=54).

***“The 3-day training in October... needed to be geared toward the needs of the participants more, and all the participants were in different places. (My) county was bored, and I know there were other counties that were overwhelmed.”
(SDFS coordinator)***

“Here in (our) county, we really thought we had it all together. We went to that 3-day training, and our team came back knee-walking. Like all the state grants, they spout off all of this theoretical ha-ha, and then they give you a training which is the epitome of too little-too late, except that it’s really way too much, way too late.” (HotSpot coordinator).

5. Processes used by the planning committees in planning for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant

Every county did a needs assessment for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. The LMB directors were asked how comprehensive this needs assessment was in comparison to their previous needs assessments. Thirty-six percent said this needs assessment was “slightly more comprehensive,” while almost one-third (32%) reported it was “much more comprehensive” (n=22). When asked what new areas of need are being examined in this needs assessment which were not addressed in earlier needs assessments, half claimed that substance abuse prevention was a new area, while one-quarter said that juvenile non-violent and violent arrest rates were new (n=24).

The planning committees made use of a variety of data sources. When asked about the data the planning committee examined, the 24 LMB directors reported the committees looked at:

- Maryland Adolescent Survey data (100%);
- DJJ data (100%);
- OCYF results and indicators data (96%);
- Health Department data (83%);
- Uniform crime reporting data (79%);
- Input from community members (79%); and
- Other data from law enforcement (75%).

Almost all of the planning committees conducted a resource assessment. One-third of the LMB directors said there was an informal process for examining existing programs or activities, while over half (58%) said there was a formal process, and two planning committees (8%) said no examination was made (n=24). Eighty-three percent of all planning committee members said they had examined existing programs and activities (n=132). Two examples of descriptions of how committees conducted their resource examinations follow:

“We asked DJJ and the health dept. (for adolescent programs) to provide us with a continuum of all their services from prevention to aftercare to see what wasn’t covered. We also did a big table of the continuum of services from lots of agencies (DJJ, Health, LMB, private service providers, core service agency, community-based services). In the big program table we asked which programs were research-based, but almost none were.” – LMB Director

“We wrote down every existing resource we knew of, and put them on flow charts around the room, and looked at compatible programs, and where there were gaps. In the community meeting, the YSCG planning committee shared the resources they had found, and the identified needs, and the community gave their input and interests.” – LMB Director

The four most frequent reasons (91-96%) for conducting resource assessments, according to 22 LMB directors, were to determine which:

- 1) programs are available (identify the gaps in services);
- 2) target groups are being served;
- 3) programs are research-based; and
- 4) programs are effective.

The least frequent reasons given were to determine which programs should be refunded (64%) and which programs should be expanded (82%). When all planning committee members responded to the same question, the same general pattern existed (62% to 83%) (n=127).

Many different agencies’ programs were reviewed in the resource assessments. The LMB directors were asked which agencies’ existing programs or activities were examined. More than three-quarters said: LMBs’, ADAA’s, DJJ’s, local schools’, and community organizations’ (n=24). Two-thirds reported that HotSpots’ and roughly half said that law enforcement’s programs or activities were examined. When all planning committee members answers were considered together, the percentages were lower, local schools ranked first or highest, HotSpots ranked third, and community organizations’ and law enforcement’s programs or activities were ranked last (n=128).

6. Satisfaction with the planning committees

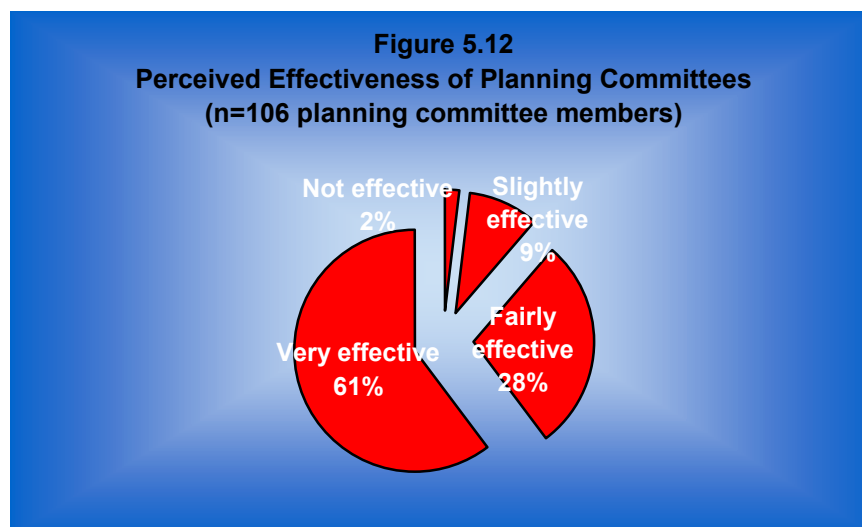
The type of decision making the planning committees used was overwhelmingly considered to be by consensus, as opposed to by voting or having one entity make most of the decisions. This was true when either the LMBs or all committee members were asked this question (n=23, n=108). Prevention coordinators most often felt that one entity made most of the decisions (7 of

9 responses). In only one county did planning committee members agree that one entity made most of the decisions.

Most planning committee members were satisfied with the decision making process that was used in their committee. Ninety-six percent of LMB directors (n=24) and 86% of all committee members (n=112) reported they were satisfied or very satisfied. Prevention coordinators were the most dissatisfied committee members with the method of decision making (50%, n=22).

Thirty-eight percent of all planning committee members interviewed said they believed there were no substantial conflicts in their committee (n=133). The primary type of conflict chosen by all the committee members (n=132) was a conflict over what programs or activities get funded (36%). The next most common types of conflicts chosen related to different disciplinary perspectives or philosophies (21%), turf issues (20%), and the process being used (17%). Conflicts over member's roles and responsibilities were the least commonly chosen form of conflict (13%).

Overall, the planning committee members felt the committees had been effective in selecting programs to meet community needs (Figure 5.12). Eighty-nine percent thought they were fairly effective or very effective. More than half of those who felt the planning committees were not effective or only slightly effective were Prevention Coordinators (58%).



Planning committee members were asked about the benefits of the youth strategies planning process. The five most frequently chosen benefits (n=132) were:

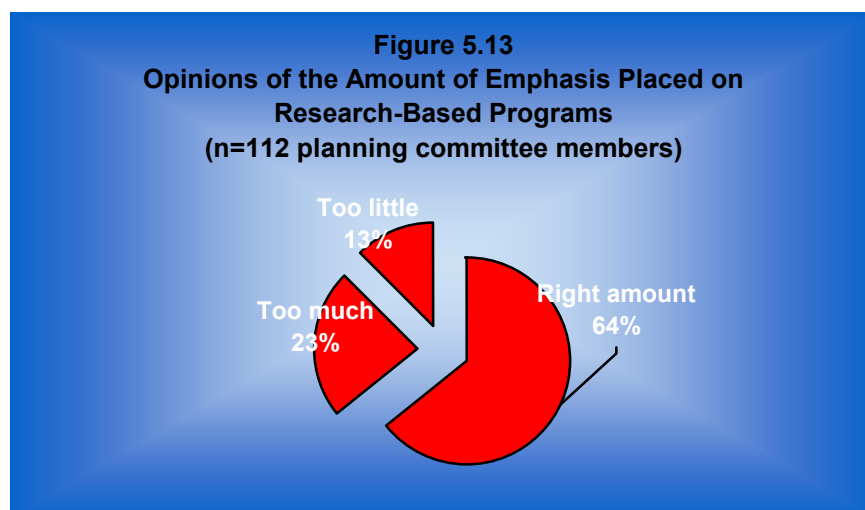
- a broad representation of local public agencies in community planning (77%);
- more research-based programs than before (69%);
- greater local authority to integrate programs that affect the community (68%);
- more money for programs (67%); and
- a larger continuum of programs being funded than before (64%).

Planning committee members were also asked about the barriers of the planning process. Barriers were chosen less frequently than benefits. The five most frequently chosen barriers (n=132) were:

- not enough time to properly plan (3 months of planning time were given)(70%);
- not enough community participation (48%);
- not enough staff or financial resources to properly plan (47%);
- limited expertise for designing research-based services (29%); and
- limited expertise for designing so many new services (24%).

7. Attitudes regarding research-based programs

Planning committee members were asked about their view of the emphasis being placed on research-based programs (Figure 5.13). While 64% thought the emphasis was the right amount, 23% thought there was too much or much too much emphasis on research-based programs, while 13 percent felt there was too little or much too little emphasis.



Planning committee members have mixed feelings about research-based programs, seeing both advantages and disadvantages to them. They were asked in an open-ended question what they thought were the benefits and disadvantages of research-based programs. The findings follow. More excerpts from planning committee member responses can be found in Appendix I.

<i>Most Frequently Mentioned Advantages to Research-Based Programs</i> <i>(n=127 planning committee members)</i>	
Research-based programs are proven, effective, or reliable programs with known outcomes (54%)	<p><i>“With research based programs you know what you can & can’t do, you can model your program for success better. We are learning from replication, we have a better idea of what worked and what didn’t, by not repeating mistakes we’re probably more successful.” Law Enforcement Rep</i></p>
Pre-designed models save time and energy from having to develop your own programs and, therefore, are convenient to use (32%)	
Research-based programs are more justifiable and credible and might lead to more funding (24%)	

<i>Most Commonly Cited Concerns about Research-Based Programs</i> <i>(n=104 planning committee members)</i>	
Suitability (43%)	<i>"What works elsewhere may not work here...For example our fastest growing group is Korean. In a county like mine our immigrant groups are constantly growing and shifting. Parents Who Care is <u>not</u> for Koreans." Prevention Coordinator</i>
Limitations to innovation (23%)	
Expense (23%)	
Rigid implementation (19%)	

Committee members varied on their views of the advantages and disadvantages of research-based programs. HotSpot Coordinators and Law Enforcement Representatives (n=28, n=11) were less likely than other planning committee members to mention a proven, effective program as an advantage (36%, 27%). HotSpots, Law Enforcement, and Juvenile Justice Representatives (n=20), however, were more likely than other planning committee members to appreciate the convenience of having a pre-designed program model (36-46%). Prevention Coordinators were much more likely than the other planning committee members to think research-based programs are too expensive (71%) or too rigid (47%, n=17). All differences reported were statistically significant.

"If you are limited to that alone, you wouldn't have the opportunity to try new stuff. As long as it's well thought out, theory based, we should be able to try new things, otherwise it's way too stifling." Law Enforcement Rep

8. Future outlook of the planning committee members

Not all planning committee members thought they would continue their participation in youth strategies after the proposal was written. At the time of the interviews, 83% of the planning committee members said they planned to continue their involvement (n=128), while 84% thought the committee would continue.

All of the LMB directors and Prevention Coordinators thought they would continue their involvement (n=24, n=22). However, 12 HotSpot Coordinators (43%), five Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, three Juvenile Justice Representatives, and two Law Enforcement Representatives did not think they would continue. A few HotSpot Coordinators expressed the opinion of not seeing a link between HotSpots and youth strategies.

Planning committee members were asked what difficulties they anticipated in carrying out the Youth Strategies Consolidation Grant over the next five years and the technical assistance that would be useful to them. Their answers to these open-ended questions point to five major areas of concern (n=91):

- evaluation (37%);
- program design, selection, implementation or integration (25%);
- program monitoring (19%);
- implementation of best practices or research-based programs (18%); and
- getting planning committee members or partners to work well together (14%).

Appendix J contains excerpts from planning committee members of their perceptions of the difficulties they would encounter and the technical assistance they felt would be useful in the future regarding youth strategies.

“The implementation piece will be the most important for the vendors. I’m not as concerned about the outcomes as I am about the level of skill that our vendors have.” – DJJ

9. Conclusions

The first-year evaluation documented substantial activity resulting from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.

Participation in the planning committees

The planning committees had full or nearly full agency partner participation.²⁰ When a committee clearly lacked a partner it tended to be either a HotSpot Coordinator or a Law Enforcement Representative. HotSpot Coordinators were also much more likely than other partners not to see a role for themselves on the youth strategies committee in the future. It is recommended that HotSpot Coordinators and Law Enforcement Representatives be encouraged to continue or begin their participation on youth strategies committees during the implementation phase of the grant. Even if they do not have any programs funded through the grant, they both play a vital professional role in the prevention and intervention of youth substance abuse and delinquency. Youth strategies should take advantage of the concentration of target population youths and families in HotSpot communities to plan and locate many effective programs in these areas.

The process: the use of comprehensive needs assessments and resource assessments

As desired, all planning committees conducted a needs assessment for the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant.²¹ Thirty-two percent of the LMB directors believed this needs assessment was much more comprehensive than their normal needs assessments. Half of the LMB directors claimed that substance abuse prevention was a new area for them.

Resource assessments were conducted by all but two counties, according to the LMB directors. Planning committee members described a resource assessment process in which the partners were involved, and a wide range of programs was examined. The assessments were usually done for the proper reasons – to identify gaps in services and to learn about target populations and effective programs. However, 62% of all planning committee members also thought the refunding of programs was a reason for conducting the resource assessment.

²⁰ Excluding five committees where data were ambiguous due to inconsistencies among partners.

²¹ Those counties that received planning grants were given six months and a \$10,000 grant to engage in a longer planning process before they applied for implementation funds.

Community input in the planning committee

The planning committees involved service providers in the planning process to a much greater degree than other community stakeholders, and almost half of the committee members reported that inadequate community participation was a barrier to the planning process. Community stakeholder input should be encouraged during the implementation phase.

Satisfaction with the planning process

Satisfaction with the planning process is considered to be an important factor because satisfied members are expected to have a greater investment in the process and to be more committed to their future participation and to the future success of the youth strategies initiative. Eighty-six to eighty-nine percent of planning committee members felt the committees were at least fairly effective in selecting new programs to meet community needs, and were satisfied or very satisfied with the decision making process of the committees.

The most dissatisfied committee members were the Prevention Coordinators. During the interviews, dissatisfied Prevention Coordinators expressed unhappiness with anticipated funding losses. Since Prevention Coordinators are important members of the planning committees, they should be encouraged to continue to provide input and guidance in spite of their initial dissatisfaction with the process.

The most frequently chosen benefits of the planning process agree with the goals of the youth strategies initiative: broad public agency representation, more research-based programs, the authority to integrate programs, and a larger continuum of programs than before. However, the barriers point to areas that could use some improvement. Future planning efforts should give applicants more time to properly plan, should involve more community participation, should have more staff or financial resources, and planners should have more expertise for designing research-based services. In this first planning cycle, planning committees were given three months for the planning process. In the next planning cycle, they will be given six months.

The capacity of planning committee members

More training is recommended as a means of increasing the capacity of planning committee members to more effectively implement youth strategies programs and to engage in future systems changes. More training would be useful in the following areas: the implementation of research-based programs, substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention, juvenile justice issues, outcome evaluations, program monitoring, and in how to ensure the long-term commitment of committee members.

Those most in need of training are HotSpot Coordinators who need training in research-based programs, substance abuse prevention, delinquency prevention, and juvenile justice. Next are DJJ Representatives who need training in all of these areas except juvenile justice. All mandated partners might benefit from more training in delinquency prevention. All but the DJJ representatives could use training in juvenile justice issues. Finally, since substance abuse prevention is a relatively new program area for the LMBs, the LMB staff need more of this training.

Attitudes about research-based programs

Clearly not everyone on the planning committees is convinced that research-based programs are preferable: Twenty-three percent of all committee members thought there was too much emphasis on research-based programs. The most common concern cited by 43% of all committee members was that research-based programs are unsuitable (n=104). Rural participants in particular expressed this opinion. The next most common concerns were that research-based programs limit innovation, are too expensive, and have to be implemented too rigidly.

If there is to be an ongoing commitment by the State and counties to research-based programs, further education on the usefulness and proper implementation of research-based programs is advised. Planning committee members should be provided with updated reports of research-based programs as they become available from the major federal sources and from Maryland Blueprints. The field of research-based programs is constantly expanding and committees should be apprised of the latest developments. Reports of research-based programs that cross disciplinary boundaries or that identify essential core components or effective principles of research-based programs would be especially valuable. Future meetings and trainings should highlight the successes and lessons learned of planning committees in implementing their research-based programs.

Properly designed and implemented program evaluations should be done whenever affordable and practicable for the proven, promising, and innovative programs being implemented through the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant to inform the committees and State policymakers of the relative success of these programs. Future decisions regarding whether to continue investments in research-based programs will depend on such solid evaluation information.

The expense of research-based programs can be a real deterrent to their use. For instance, the Maryland Blueprints manual reports that the cost of a program can range from \$200 for anger control training, to \$8,000 for a 2.5 day on-site training for Teen Outreach. To save on training costs, GOCCP has wisely scheduled and paid for training, which is open to all interested communities that are implementing or planning to implement these research-based programs. It is recommended that this practice be continued. In addition, since HotSpots, Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice Representatives see more advantage in having a convenient pre-designed program than in promises of proven program effectiveness, this more practical advantage should be stressed in future communications with them.

VI. Summary

CESAR has completed its first year evaluations of the State prevention strategy effort and the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. For its evaluation of the State prevention strategy, CESAR conducted baseline interviews with representatives of eight State agencies or agency units, reviewed supporting documentation, and observed all 20 State-level prevention meetings since July 2001. For its evaluation of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant, CESAR staff interviewed the 24 LMB directors and 122 mandated partners of the local planning committees, and reviewed the Guidance and Application Kit.

The evaluation has documented substantial activity resulting from the State's prevention strategy effort. In the first year, State-level prevention committees formed by GOCCP and OCYF produced a prevention recommendations document, a prevention implementation plan, and have completed four activities from the implementation plan that will contribute to systems change. These activities are: 1) the creation and distribution of an inventory form to gather state agency information on prevention programs, funding, and training; 2) the statewide use of the DJJ substance abuse and mental health screening tool; 3) the creation of a Blueprints manual that identifies proven research-based prevention program models and strategies; and 4) the scheduling of regional training for local youth strategies grant partners.

The State has set up three prevention committees: the planning committee, the training and technical assistance committee, and the linkages committee. These committees reflect the three major goals of the implementation plan. These committees have been meeting since February 2002. Agency representation on the planning committees has steadily increased. Many child- and youth-serving State agencies serve on one or more of the committees. The committees are just beginning their accomplishments, and it is expected that they will continue to attain many more systems change objectives in the years ahead. CESAR is documenting their progress toward the creation and implementation of this state prevention strategy.

Our evaluation found a strong need for a unifying theory or guidelines for prevention and for a consensus on definitions of prevention and research-based programs. Also, there is a need for more formal, and more frequent, agency collaborations and linkages, and increased coordination of prevention funding. In this context, the development of a statewide prevention strategy is a laudable goal to create a more integrated system.

The first-year evaluation documented substantial activity resulting from the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant. The Local Management Boards were a good choice as lead agencies, since they have the authority and experience to do local planning, oversight, and coordination. The planning committees, composed of five mandated partners and the LMB staff, appeared to have fulfilled the basic objectives of the grant application planning process by including mandated partners and assessing needs and program resources. This collaborative and data-driven process is considered essential for strategic planning for a local continuum of services for youth. Partners were generally satisfied with the process and with their perceived effectiveness at selecting programs to meet community needs.

The evaluation found that some areas should be addressed in future planning efforts, including giving more time to applicants and encouraging more community participation. In fact, committees will be given six months for their next cycle of planning. Also, it was clear that some planning committee members were not convinced of the merits of research-based programs, which were strongly encouraged in the grant's application kit. Partners' training tended to be limited to their own areas of expertise. To increase the capacity of the planning committees and to ensure future sustainment of the grant's goals, training in other areas of expertise, and in the implementation of research-based programs, would be very useful.

During the implementation stage of the Youth Strategies Consolidated Grant over the next four and half years, CESAR will continue to document the activities, perceptions, and collaborations of the committee members to determine success in meeting the grant goals.